

Daniel Defoe: *The Family Instructor*

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PhD Submission

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and effort and that it has not been submitted anywhere for any award. Where other sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

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## Abstract

The focus of this thesis is *The Family Instructor* by Daniel Defoe. There are two books: Volume I, first published in 1715, and Volume II, published in 1718. In both cases I have used the Pickering and Chatto edition, published in 2006 and edited by P.N. Furbank.

The thesis examines *The Family Instructor*, in the contexts of family, religion and of its style, to argue that, although usually classed as a conduct book, it is not easily categorised, reflecting as it does Defoe's transitional status between ancient and modern times.

The Introduction gives my argument. After the opening chapter, which contains critical remarks on Defoe's work, Chapter Two considers *The Family Instructor* in the context of contemporary representations of the family. The older, patriarchal model is examined. In this the husband/ and father is responsible for the entire household, whereas the modern, "nuclear", version, which is also examined, relies less on status and more on contractual and emotional relationships.

Chapter Three looks at religion, beginning with an overview of the many sects which are significant for an understanding of *The Family Instructor*. The chapter argues that although Defoe is at times close to the Latitudinarian position and despite his claim that the work is designed to apply both to Anglicans and Dissenters, his overall position is that of a Dissenter.

Chapter Four examines the conduct book genre and goes on to compare the style of *The Family Instructor* with that of *Robinson Crusoe* in particular, arguing that the former does not qualify as a "conduct book" and that many of the devices which Defoe uses in his first long narrative are present in *The Family Instructor*. The Conclusion draws together the arguments of the preceding chapters.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout the thesis.

- Allestree, *Duty* Richard Allestree (attrib.), *The Whole Duty of Man* (London, 1659)
- Backscheider Paula R. Backscheider, *Daniel Defoe: His Life* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989)
- Bayly Lewis Bayly, *The Practice of Piety* (London, 1630)
- Coward, *Stuart Age* Barry Coward, *The Stuart Age: England 1603-1714*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London and New York: Longman, 1994)
- Christian Dictionary* Cross, F.L. and E.A. Livingstone, eds *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Hunter, *Companion* J. Paul Hunter, 'The novel and social/cultural history' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-century Novel*, ed. John J. Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)
- Hunter, *Novels* J. Paul Hunter, *Before Novels: the Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990)
- Hunter, *Pilgrim* J. Paul Hunter, *The Reluctant Pilgrim: Defoe's Emblematic Method and Quest for Form in Robinson Crusoe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996)
- Novak, *Companion* Maximillian E. Novak, 'Defoe as an innovator of fictional form' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* ed. John J. Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Novak,

*Defoe Companion* Maximillian E. Novak, 'Defoe's political and religious journalism' in *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*, ed. John J. Richetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Novak, *Economics* Maximillian E. Novak, *Economicss and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963)

Novak, *Master*

*of Fictions* Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Novak, *Nature* Maximillian E. Novak, *Defoe and the Nature of Man* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963)

Richetti, *Companion* John J. Richetti, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Richetti, *Crusoe* John J. Richetti, ed. *Robinson Crusoe* (London: Penguin, 2001, repr 2003)

Richetti, *Defoe* John J. Richetti, *Daniel Defoe* (Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1987)

Richetti,

*Defoe Companion* John J. Richetti, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Richetti, *Life* John J. Richetti, *The Life of Daniel Defoe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005)

Richetti, *Narratives* John J. Richetti, *Defoe's Narratives, Situations and Structures*  
(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975)

Watt, *Rise* Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and*  
*Fielding* (Harmondsworth: Peregrine Penguin, 1963)

## Introduction

Only the most avid Defoe readers know that Defoe wrote *The Family Instructor*.<sup>1</sup> Those who have read it tend not to like it. It is true that *The Family Instructor* challenges the twenty-first-century reader's way of seeing things. As when reading anything written before our time, we need to make certain accommodations. For instance, we need to take a different view of religion and its importance to the writers of conduct books in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. When Defoe was writing religion mattered to all his readers; they saw this life as primarily a preparation for the next, in which humankind would be rewarded or punished. But, although our values are different, the issues raised in the work are timeless. For example, the defiance of their parents by the elder teenagers echoes the behaviour of modern youngsters. The wives who defy their husbands in Volume II would today be granted the right to their own point of view. This perhaps accounts for the popularity of the work in its time, as much as the *way* in which it was written. In his Introduction to the Pickering & Chatto edition, P.N. Furbank argues that as a result, the modern reader sides with the "wrong" characters and that we should side with the father and share his anxieties about his children's souls. Furbank suggests that this results in undermining Defoe's purpose (I. 15). But is it not always the case with works written in previous times? To say otherwise is to deny the value of the work for today's readers. Considering the role of the reader, Umberto Eco argues that "any text can be interpreted however the 'model reader' likes."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor*, Volume I (1715) and Volume II (1718); Daniel Defoe, *Religious and Didactic Works of Daniel Defoe*, gen. eds W.R. Owens and P.N. Furbank, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), I and II ed. P.N. Furbank. All references are to this latter edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1979), p. 8.

Furthermore, all the techniques which characterise Defoe's later "novels" are evident in *The Family Instructor*: its presentation of experience through the consciousness of the observer, its stress on how reality is perceived, its focus on the family and its preoccupations, its use of dialogue and the struggle between the individual and communal, accepted values. If novels are characterised by interiority, if they allow us into the individual mind, then Defoe's interest in the way his protagonists experience their lives is relevant. This quality is obvious in *The Family Instructor*, which anticipates this development. We can see it in his presentation of the two elder young people in Volume I and of the wives in Volume II.

The focus of this thesis is *The Family Instructor*, Volumes I and II, published in 1715 and 1718 respectively. Defoe's *A New Family Instructor*, published in 1727, is not part of my consideration. First comes the Introduction, which sets out the argument of the whole thesis. The Chapter I gives an overview of attitudes towards Defoe's work in general. Chapter Two attempts to contextualise Defoe's presentation of the family in *The Family Instructor*, arguing that this work relies on the earlier form of the family for its effectiveness, despite being written in 1715 and 1718. The third chapter sets out to contextualise religion, arguing that despite Defoe's often expressed comment that the work applies equally to Anglicans and Dissenters, who were both charged with the introduction of family worship, his Nonconformist origins get the better of him, and the type of religion he advocates in fact is of the Dissenting variety. Chapter Four examines the style of the work, comparing it in particular with *Robinson Crusoe*, the first of the long narratives we now call novels, arguing that many of the literary devices Defoe uses in this narrative, written in 1719, are present in *The Family Instructor*. Finally, the Conclusion brings together concluding arguments.

As its title indicates, family is central to the work. There are husbands, wives and children; later, servants and friends. Defoe's title to the second edition of Volume I (1715) reads, *The Family Instructor in Three PARTS; I. Relating to Fathers and Children. II. To Masters and Servants. III. To Husbands and Wives* (I. 42). It is also written in dialogue form: Part I is made up of eight dialogues, Part II is made up of five and Part III is also made up of five dialogues. In Part I of the work the family consists of the father and mother, a small son "about five or six Years old [...] *our own youngest Child*" (I. 47, 86), the eldest daughter, "about eighteen Years old" and her "*elder Brother*" (I. 95-6), the eldest son. "Their other Children were younger" (I. 111), a boy and girl. In Part II, though according to its title relating to "Masters and Servants", the theme of family persists. Two families are contrasted. Both are of the merchant class, but in one the father "constantly maintain'd the Exercise of Religious Worship in his House, instructing and educating his Children and Servants in the Fear and Knowledge of God" (I. 161-2) whereas in the other, the father "liv'd in a constant hurry of Business, so that he had really no time to think of, or to spare about Religious Affairs", either in respect of his children or his servants (I. 162). The focus here is on the contrast between the two apprentices, Will and Tom, who enter the two contrasting families. The theme of family emerges in relation to the upbringing of the apprentices and their subsequent placement in suitable situations, the onus being on *their* families to ensure that they are brought up according to religious priorities and thereafter placed in suitable situations. Part III returns to the two eldest children of the family in Part I and follows them through the results of their choice of spouse. The marriage of the daughter allows Defoe to explore the relative duties of husband and wife, well before he devoted a whole book to it.<sup>3</sup>

The full title of Volume II reads *THE Family Instructor. IN TWO PARTS.*

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<sup>3</sup>Daniel Defoe, *Religious Courtship* (London, 1722).

I. *Relating to Family Breaches, and their obstructing Religious Duties.*

II *To the great Mistake of mixing the Passions, in the Managing and Correcting of Children*

WITH

*A great Variety of Cases relating to setting Ill Examples to Children and Servants.*

Like the first Volume it is written in dialogue form. Part I of the second Volume is made up of three dialogues. These concern the attempts of husbands to instigate family worship where their wives, unlike the wife of Part I, Volume I, are unwilling to acquiesce. It begins with the “*Story of Two very bad Wives*” (II. 3), designed to show, as Defoe is keen to point out in his Preface, that “*the Reproof is upon Husbands for omitting Family Worship, and pretending the Fault is in their Wives*” (II. 3). The second dialogue of Volume II introduces the figure of “Sir Richard”, the irreligious brother of one of the wives and the narrative involves as much his family as those into which the women marry. Part I ends with Sir Richard’s conversion. Part II has five dialogues, the first two concerning the role of religion, and especially of “the passions” in the education of children, both ending in the resolution of family strife. The final three dialogues involve a pious child reforming his family through his example and allowing Defoe to comment on the slave trade through the character of Toby; the presentation of the “Sea Captain”, exemplifying the caring father, and an example of a faithful servant, Margy. The last dialogue ends the tale of Margy and then returns to the father and neighbour of the first dialogue; Defoe asserts that all the narratives in between have been for the edification of this first father.

The work’s publication history is also interesting. According to P.N. Furbank, “this was to become one of the most popular of Defoe’s works, second only to *Robinson Crusoe*” (I.

331). Originally it was printed by Joseph Button in Newcastle, with an introductory letter by the Reverend Samuel Wright. He was less than complimentary, however, especially regarding its printed state. Defoe withdrew the work, had it re-printed in London by Emmanuel Matthews, minus Wright's letter, and with his own corrections and preface. Thereafter it was reprinted many times. The British Library Integrated Catalogue lists several more editions, in Glasgow in 1717, in 1720, 1734, 1787, and in Newcastle in 1809. The English Short Title Catalogue further lists several printings in America which were "taken from the 18th English edition", before a "Complete" version was published in Liverpool in 1800. Irving R. Rothman suggests that there are 93 editions in all, but that the two volumes are often separated.<sup>4</sup> Investigations into the work's early publishing history have been printed in a number of scholarly journals.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Irving N. Rothman, 'Defoe Census of *The Family Instructor* and *The Political History of the Devil*', *Notes and Queries*, 221 (1976), pp. 486-92.

<sup>5</sup> Dessagene C. Ewing, 'The First Printing of Defoe's *Family Instructor*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 65 (1971), pp. 269-72; Irving N. Rothman, 'Donald Govan: Defoe's Glasgow Printer of *The Family Instructor*,' *The Bibliotech* 12 (1984), pp. 70-83.

## Chapter 1

### **An overview of Defoe's Work**

We now consider Defoe's work as a whole. An overview shows that he has been differently viewed over time. Defoe was a prolific writer and he lived a relatively long life. Leaving aside his significance in the literary canon, these facts alone have implications for a literature survey. Many scholars have written about him. I have divided this survey of secondary literature into four parts: first is an overview of developments in interpretations of his writing, concentrating on the critical writers who have changed the parameters of the debate about him; next comes an appraisal of writings on *The Family Instructor*; thirdly is an overview of writings I have drawn on to try to establish the historical, social and religious contexts in which he wrote *The Family Instructor*, and finally an overview of writings which attempt to explain the way the work is written, in comparison with *Robinson Crusoe* in particular.

Defoe wrote a very few personal letters towards the end of his life; there is no diary and thus little writing which gives insight into the man's inner life. In the preface to his 2005 critical biography, Richetti identifies a key problem in coming to a fair assessment of this writer. He says, "much is known about Defoe [in the] factual record, [but] almost nothing is known or certain about his inner life, except what he chose to reveal about himself; [... he] remains an elusive and even a mysterious figure".<sup>1</sup> Richetti quotes Furbank and Owens, who take a similar line: "much of the trouble in understanding Defoe [...] stems from the fact that the personality he presents to us in his writings is completely a construction, allowing us to guess

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<sup>1</sup>Richetti, *Life*, pp.vi, viii.

only dimly at the ‘real’ Defoe”.<sup>2</sup> Although many biographers stress that little is known about Defoe’s beginnings, since Lee’s 1869 work there have been over a dozen Defoe biographies.<sup>3</sup> He was controversial to his contemporaries and often hated or misunderstood by them, or both; a prolific writer on current events and politics, a poet and satirist, an observer of contemporary life in England and Scotland, a spy and a key figure in the development of the novel. He remains mysterious. There is no record of his birth. He is thought to have been born in 1660 or 1661 in St Giles Cripplegate in the City of London, on the basis that the baptisms of his two sisters, Mary in November 1657 and Elizabeth in June 1659, were recorded in the register of that parish. Whilst there is no actual evidence for this date or place of birth it seems plausible and as Paula Backscheider says, “there is no evidence to refute it”.<sup>4</sup> In any case, it hardly matters; there is plenty of evidence that Defoe existed.

More importantly, there is agreement on some central facts about Defoe which have been seen as significant in the analysis of his writing. The first of these relates to his religious upbringing. Whether or not they were his natural parents, James and Alice Foe brought him up in the city of London, in a Dissenting Protestant family. Biographers such as James Sutherland in 1937, Paula Backscheider in 1989, Maximillian E. Novak in 2001 and John J. Richetti in 2005 all see this “Puritan” inheritance as significant. After the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 a series of laws were passed which curtailed the civil and religious rights of this previously flourishing community. Backscheider speaks for several biographers when she says, “Daniel [...] grew up as part of a persecuted minority”.<sup>5</sup> One result was that throughout Defoe’s life he associated himself with the Protestant rather than the “Popish” cause. His defence of the Dissenters recurs in a number of works from the publication of *A*

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<sup>2</sup> *Canonisation*, p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> William Lee, *Daniel Defoe: His Life and Recently Discovered Writings*, 3 vols (London, 1869).  
<sup>4</sup> Backscheider, p. 3. Only John Martin disagrees, claiming Defoe was actually born in Etton, Northamptonshire, in 1644. John Martin, *Beyond Belief: The real life of Daniel Defoe* (Pembroke: Accent Press), 2006). Martin’s thesis has not received support from Defoe scholars. See, for example, J.A. Downie, “Defoe’s Birth”, *The Scriblerian*, 45(2013), 225-230.

<sup>5</sup> Backscheider, p. 7.

*Letter to a Dissenter from his friend at the Hague* in 1688 onwards. Reconsidering its significance in 2000, W.R. Owens stressed Defoe's "strong sense of fellow-feeling" with this religious group.<sup>6</sup> This early experience might also explain his tendency to identify with any group with a "cause", especially if they were oppressed. Owens and Furbank's *Chronology* lists his support for the Palatine refugees in 1709; he "acts as spokesman" for two wine wholesalers in 1711, for the "keel-men" of Newcastle in 1712 and for a "brass company" in 1713.<sup>7</sup> He was also inclined to present himself as hard-done-by and long-suffering. The impact of his Protestant Nonconformist legacy on his fiction, as well as on his politics and religious works, is the focus for a number of scholarly interpretations.

There was a further effect. Being the son of Dissenting parents made him ineligible for a university education. This came about through the passing of the Acts known as the Clarendon Code shortly after the Restoration of Charles II. Charles's subjects were required, among other things, to accept the Book of Common Prayer as revised in 1661 and "authorised" by the Acts of Uniformity of 1662. Among the penalties for refusing to accept essentially the precedence of the Church of England was the disbaring of the sons of those dissenting from the Acts from university.<sup>8</sup> One result of the Acts was the formation and development of "Academies", where Dissenters could educate their sons according to their own religious preferences. Thus Defoe went to such an academy, run in Stoke Newington by Charles Morton, between 1674 and late 1679 or early 1680.<sup>9</sup> The curriculum emphasised history, geography and mathematics and was delivered in the vernacular, not in Latin.

Scholars were also expected to debate in English. Defoe's brilliance is of course his own, but this education surely suited his penchant for polemics. It would also have exposed him to the

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Political and economic writings of Daniel Defoe*, 8 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), III, *Dissent*, ed. W.R. Owens., p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Religious and Didactic Writing of Daniel Defoe*, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), I, *Chronology*, eds Furbank P. N. and W.R. Owens, pp. 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> The term "Dissenters" has its origins here. It is generally thought to refer only to English Protestants but also included Catholic recusants.

<sup>9</sup> Backscheider, pp.14-15.

early ideas of John Locke and the “new” sciences of Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton, strands of contemporary thought from which originated, among other things, the movement towards secularism which characterised the eighteenth century. Defoe’s attendance at Morton’s for at least part of a further year suggests that at the time he was aiming for a career in the ministry, an interpretation borne out by his own subsequent testimony.<sup>10</sup> The mixture of religious and secular emphases in this education and its stress on argument are reflected in the tensions of his work.

Three other features which are significant for his writing emerge from the biographies. The first concerns money. He seems to have quickly run through the substantial dowry of £3,700 Mary Tuffley brought to their marriage. Defoe’s inability to manage his finances led to more than one bankruptcy and several spells in prison. This seems partly to chime with his sense of persecution; but also, his prison experience put him in touch with the criminality which became a significant strand in his writing. It gave him first hand insights into isolation and despair, but may also account for the value he places on endurance and his attempts to understand the workings of Providence; all these characterise his work.

The second feature concerns trade. When he abandoned his plan to become a minister he set up as a merchant, trade being one of the few means of earning a living open to Dissenters, so long as it was not in any way connected with government or civil service business. Whilst he later made writing his career, the honourable nature of trade is a recurrent theme throughout his work. It is the basis for his vision of a united kingdom expanding into a world power.

Thirdly, Defoe seems to have had a tendency to conceal and deliberately to confuse. He was certainly secretive. Nearly all his work was published anonymously, like that of his contemporaries, and he wrote under numerous pseudonyms. Though this often gave him the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp.14-15; Daniel Defoe, *Review* for 22 October 1709 in *Defoe’s Review*, VI (1709), ed. Arthur Wellesley Secord (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938).

advantage and protected him from his enemies, it has led to difficulties of attribution. Many works which he could never have written have been ascribed to him. John Robert Moore produced his first *Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe* in 1960, citing five hundred and seventy works as Defoe's.<sup>11</sup> Twenty-eight years later P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens reassessed the basis for identifying Defoe's output.<sup>12</sup> In 1994 they published *Defoe De-Attributions: A Critique of J.R. Moore's 'Checklist'* in which they questioned the attribution of nearly half of the works included by Moore.<sup>13</sup> Furbank and Owens' current view is given in their 1998 *Critical Bibliography*, which provides evidence for the inclusion of each work.<sup>14</sup> In 2001 Novak took issue with their decisions, however, asserting that they were "motivated by their own bias" which included "a biographical notion that Defoe did not contradict himself in his printed writings"; Novak argued that Defoe's letters "run contrary" to this view.<sup>15</sup> Like Moore, Furbank and Owens assert that their attempt at a revised bibliography is partly to establish a foundation for a "full and satisfactory biography of Defoe".<sup>16</sup> "It may be that only by a purge of the bibliography will it be possible to make sense of the author known as 'Daniel Defoe'".<sup>17</sup>

Nonetheless, Defoe's secretiveness together with his literary talent made him potentially useful to Robert Harley, secretary of state between 1704 and 1708.<sup>18</sup> When Defoe was imprisoned in 1703 for seditious libel as a result of the publication of his satirical attack, *The Shortest Way With the Dissenters*, Harley obtained a pardon from Queen Anne so that Defoe

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<sup>11</sup> John Robert Moore, *A Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *Defoe De-Attributions: A Critique of J.R. Moore's "Checklist"* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994).

<sup>14</sup> P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *A Critical Bibliography of Daniel Defoe* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> Maximillian E. Novak, *Daniel Defoe, Master of Fictions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Canonisation*, p.174.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Harley was Chancellor of the Exchequer and Second Lord of the Treasury when he was elevated to the peerage in May 1711, at which point he became Lord Treasurer (with the treasury taken out of commission).

was released in November of the same year. For Harley Defoe travelled round England, reporting on a variety of contemporary issues and setting up an intelligence network. He fulfilled this role until the death of Anne and the fall of the government in 1714 which led to the impeachment of Harley and the loss of Defoe's patron.

Many of the biographies deal with Defoe's works as well as with his life. At times his life is hard to decipher without any personal documentation; furthermore, his late fictions are written in the form of fictional biographies. These factors have led some biographers to draw fanciful conclusions from his life or works. Peter Earle raised this issue in 1976 in *The World of Defoe*.<sup>19</sup> Bringing an economic historian's objectivity to Defoe's life and works, Earle criticised the current biographies largely on the grounds that their authors had been too inventive where the facts about Defoe's life are unknown.

Referring to Defoe's statement that *Robinson Crusoe* was both allegorical and autobiographical, Ian Watt says, "the claim to some autobiographical relevance cannot be wholly rejected; *Robinson Crusoe* is the only book for which he made this claim".<sup>20</sup> Earlier, Defoe had asserted autobiographical veracity in his *Appeal to Honour and Justice*, however, where both he and his publisher referred to a recent life-threatening "apoplexy", or stroke.<sup>21</sup> Most commentators now regard this as a publicity ploy and show that other statements in the piece are dubious. Whilst a certain amount of fact can be gleaned from Defoe's *Review* and from his extant letters, it is important to remember that the majority of the latter were not personal but were political, and written to Robert Harley, who saved them for posterity for this reason.<sup>22</sup> Although it seems feasible that so prolific a writer who spent much time away from home must have corresponded with his wife at least, tantalisingly few personal letters

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<sup>19</sup> Peter Earle, *The World of Defoe* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976).

<sup>20</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An Appeal to Honour and Justice* (London, 1715).

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Letters of Daniel Defoe*, ed. George Harris Healey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).

are available to us. Drawing parallels between Defoe's life and his work remains speculative and, being in a position to look back from a long distance, we may see connections where none in fact existed. Despite the apparently endless fascination of Defoe's life, critical approaches have recently focused more minutely on Defoe's writing.

The most influential commentary to shape the way Defoe has been seen since the middle of the twentieth century has been Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, first published in 1957. In exploring the novel's origins Watt proposed his now-famous "triple rise" theory, that the growth of the middle class gave rise to a growth of the reading public, which in turn caused the rise of the novel, to satisfy the demands for reading matter of this new, bourgeois, reading public. Later scholars have modified, and in some cases, challenged, Watt's theory. Watt argued that the defining feature of the novel was its "formal realism" which he described as "a set of narrative procedures [which imply that] the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its readers with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms".<sup>23</sup> The novel, argued Watt, copies reality and thus lives in its historical setting. Watt credits Defoe, Richardson and Fielding with having developed more fully than their predecessors this narrative method. Some of the difficulties of defining the novel were outlined by J. Paul Hunter. He noted that the novel was also significant for its "Contemporaneity [...] Credibility [... ] Familiarity [...] Rejection of traditional plots [...] Tradition-free language [...] Individualism, subjectivity [... ] Empathy and vicariousness [...] Coherence and unity of design [...] Inclusivity, digressiveness,

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<sup>23</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 93.

fragmentation: The ability to parenthesize [...] self-consciousness about innovation and novelty”.<sup>24</sup>

Designating Defoe as the earliest proponent of the novel limited critical attention to his long narratives. It also located him significantly in a way of seeing the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as a period of developing secularism, with the expansion of world trade leading to Britain’s position as an imperial power. Not surprisingly therefore Defoe’s novels were of particular interest to commentators with a Marxist standpoint and later to post-colonial scholars.

Watt argued that “economic individualism characterises all Defoe’s main characters” since all his heroes pursue money”.<sup>25</sup> Defoe was regarded as an early “economist” and *Robinson Crusoe* was of special interest because it could be seen as exemplifying a Marxist interpretation of history. It was Marx himself who saw Crusoe as an exemplar of capitalism, because, in Watt’s words, “there is an absolute equivalence between individual effort and individual reward”; there is no middleman to exploit the individual’s work.<sup>26</sup> In 1962 Novak challenged the defining notion of “economic individualism”. Setting out “to reveal the general background of ideas that influenced [Defoe’s] fiction” he argued that the schemes Defoe set out in his *Essay Upon Projects*, for instance, “were in no way farsighted, prophetic predictions of modern social security and unemployment insurance, for they looked back rather than forward”.<sup>27</sup> He gave other examples of what he considered Defoe’s anachronistic “mercantilism”, claiming Defoe was “opposed to individualism in financial matters”.<sup>28</sup> Later he says, “if Defoe used economic man in his fiction, his view of him would of necessity be

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<sup>24</sup> Hunter, *Novels*, pp. 22–25.

<sup>25</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 75.

<sup>27</sup> Novak, *Economics*, pp. ix, 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

ambiguous. He admired the merchant, but not the capitalist or even the tradesman who made excessive profits”, citing as evidence Defoe’s “attack upon stockjobbing, the South Sea Company, and the East India Company”.<sup>29</sup>

Novak’s work prompted a vigorous response in 1987 from Bram Dijkstra, who argued that Novak did not understand economics. Dijkstra set out to investigate “the effects of ideology on the methods and goals of interpretation, [how] ideological considerations have come to modify a reading of Defoe which, by the 1950s, had come very close to establishing an accurate historical contour of this pivotal eighteenth-century author”.<sup>30</sup> In other words, no critic could ever be truly objective; predisposition would always colour the outcome. The same could, of course, be said of Dijkstra. Supporting Ian Watt’s theory of “economic individualism” and illustrating his argument from *Roxana* Dijkstra says, “basically Novak’s thesis was that since Defoe could not be regarded as in sympathy with economic individualism, but in fact specifically opposed it, he must have designed his narratives as a moralistic refutation of the actions of his main characters”.<sup>31</sup>

In the same year John Richetti agreed with Novak that Defoe was not an innovator in terms of “economic individualism”, and that he was “an economic conservative to the extent that he consistently opposed alterations to the status quo; [his was a] deeply conservative mercantilism”.<sup>32</sup> Richetti then quoted at length from Novak’s 1962 book.<sup>33</sup>

In 2008, after re-examining Crusoe’s musings about the lack of value of his money on the island, W.R. Owens concluded that “Marx’s and Crusoe’s ideas about money are in close agreement”. However, Owens rejected both the idea that Marx saw Crusoe as an example of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>30</sup> Bram Dijkstra, *Defoe and Economics: The Fortunes of Roxana in the History of Interpretation* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. xi.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>32</sup> Richetti, *Defoe*, p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> Novak, *Economics*, pp.5-6.

capitalism and Watt's description of him as "an archetypal capitalist".<sup>34</sup> Owens quotes Watt's reference to the island episodes as "a classic idyll of free enterprise"; this "seems a very strange notion" says Owens, "seeing that none of the constituents of capitalism – trade, investment, competition, the profit motive or (until the arrival of Friday) a proletariat – are present on Crusoe's island".<sup>35</sup>

Not surprisingly, none of the Marxists give much weight to Defoe's religion. Describing *Robinson Crusoe* Marx said, "I am not here concerned with his praying and the like, for Robinson Crusoe delights in these kinds of activity, and looks upon them as recreation".<sup>36</sup> Is it as clear cut as this? The need to come to terms with God, and especially to understand His working through Providence, is important to Crusoe. Sometimes, as in his dream of the angel of death, it frightens him. However, Ian Watt found Crusoe's religion had "curiously little [...] actual effect [...] on his behaviour".<sup>37</sup> In 2005 Eagleton, also writing on *Crusoe* from a Marxist viewpoint, follows a similar line. He concedes that Defoe's "moral and religious values are a reality in their own right" but argues that "they exist in a realm of their own, which may be real enough but which has little impact on one's actual conduct".<sup>38</sup> Thus, equating morality with religion, he says, "morally informed action is rare; moral reflection is what generally comes afterwards".<sup>39</sup> To be sure all these remarks relate to Defoe's most famous work of "fiction", but Eagleton is I think right to stress that religious and moral values were intrinsically important to Defoe. The relationship between religious and secular values is a major theme in all his long narratives from *Crusoe* in 1719 to *Roxana* in 1724 and he went on to examine these values in late non-fiction such as *A Political History of the Devil*

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<sup>34</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Novels of Daniel Defoe*, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), I, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. W.R. Owens, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>36</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy: The Process of Capitalist Production*, trans from the fourth German edition by Eden & Cedar Paul (London: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1928), p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 83.

<sup>38</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An introduction* (Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2005), p. 29.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

(1726) and *Conjugal Lewdness* (1727). In terms of critical scholarship, the examination of the religious aspects of Defoe's work led to a broader view of his achievement, although its relationship with his contemporary viewpoint is often seen as problematic.

Thus, another seed planted by Watt which was to grow significantly was his comment on the apparent conflict between Defoe's "Puritanism" and the secularism which was beginning to characterise his time. Considering why Crusoe's religion had "curiously little" effect on his behaviour, Watt concluded that "it is in the last analysis the result of an unresolved and probably unconscious conflict in Defoe himself".<sup>40</sup> This led to major strands of Defoe analysis. Whilst Marxist scholars had identified him with the modern and secular emphasis of contemporary life, others, Novak apart, saw him as an exemplar of "conflict" and gave prominence to his Dissenting origins.

Defoe and his family were members of Samuel Annesley's congregation at St. Giles, Cripplegate. When Annesley could not conform with the Act of Uniformity, he was "ejected" from his church and when he left, the Defoe family followed him. Although Defoe would only have been about two years old, religion clearly mattered to him, which is evident from his later work. Presbyterians, like Annesley, were inheritors of the Puritanism of the previous century. Puritans worked within the Church of England for its return to what they saw as purer forms of worship. Associated with the purported regicide of Charles I by Oliver Cromwell, they were characterised as dissidents and troublemakers throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

For some commentators the conflict was less between the religious and the secular than between changing ways of seeing the world. In 1968 Michael Shinagel asserted, "[Defoe] was himself, like Crusoe, suspended between the new mercantile spirit of the 'merchant

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<sup>40</sup> Watt, *Rise*, pp. 83-4.

adventurer' and the old traditional order of the seventeenth century [...]. This tension between the two orders is traceable in Defoe's entire career".<sup>41</sup>

Still focusing on Defoe's fiction, key commentators looked at the religious influence of Defoe's heritage on his work. George Starr, in his *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography*, was the first to develop Watt's identification of "the confessional autobiography" in Crusoe's story.<sup>42</sup> Whilst this provides an interesting insight into Crusoe's struggle to come to terms with his God, and could be seen as illuminating Roxana, the comparison reveals less about Moll, Jack and Bob Singleton.

In 1966 J. Paul Hunter similarly explored the relationship between *Robinson Crusoe* and the "providence" tradition. Acknowledging that Defoe "understood how to give anecdotes a thematic unity in the Puritan manner", he goes on to claim that Defoe "ultimately both subtilizes and expands the providence tradition's way of rendering *exempla* [by his use of] spiritual biography and pilgrim allegory", arguing that *Robinson Crusoe* is not "merely an account of the workings of providence; [...] it achieves a meaning that goes beyond a paraphrase of its theme".<sup>43</sup>

Virginia Birdsall then made a significant contribution to the debate. Defoe's works, she argued, were neither spiritual autobiography nor an "advocacy of the virtues of economic man; [...] the one is at the expense of the other".<sup>44</sup> Birdsall argued that "concern with personal salvation lies behind both the protagonists' dedication to materialistic expansion and

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Shinagel, *Daniel Defoe and Middle-Class Gentility* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 195.

<sup>42</sup> G. A. Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); Watt, *Rise*, p. 78.

<sup>43</sup> Hunter, *Pilgrim*, p. 74.

<sup>44</sup> Virginia O. Birdsall, *Defoe's Perpetual Seekers* (London & Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985), p. 21.

their worries about timely conversion”.<sup>45</sup> She argues that whichever approach we take, spiritual or socio-economic, both only work “by ignoring the cynical undercurrent almost altogether”.<sup>46</sup>

Two years later however, John Bender argued that in *Moll Flanders* Defoe used “spiritual autobiography and decisively breaks with it”.<sup>47</sup> Bender points out that Moll’s experience in Newgate starts as a spiritual rebirth but that she expresses the worst aspect of this time as “a deprivation of Thought. He that is restor’d to his Power of thinking, is restored to himself”.<sup>48</sup> This, according to Bender, is not spiritual autobiography, but Descartes, who stated, “I think; therefore I am”.

In attempting to explain the continuing popularity of *Robinson Crusoe* and Defoe’s other narratives scholars have noted that Defoe’s protagonists seem to have a significance beyond their particularity. Perhaps this is a response to the fact that these works are not easily categorised in today’s terms. Thirty years after publishing *The Rise of the Novel*, Watt explored the paradox that Defoe’s protagonists combine particularisation of identity with mythic status. They give an impression of reality but also have a representative function.<sup>49</sup> Novak had pursued a similar theme in *Realism, Myth and History in Defoe’s Fiction*, arguing that Defoe’s “characters take on mythic proportions. On one level they are always mankind and womankind confronting situations as old as the human race”.<sup>50</sup> Related to this is the idea that they are, in Eagleton’s words, “both average and exceptional”; he goes on to discuss

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary; Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.46.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p. 46; Defoe, *The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders*, ed. George Starr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.281.

<sup>49</sup> Ian Watt, *Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>50</sup> Maximillian E. Novak, *Realism, Myth and History in Defoe’s Fiction* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 15.

Defoe's "blend [of] the bizarre and the commonplace".<sup>51</sup> In his 2001 introduction to *Robinson Crusoe* Richetti made a similar point. Conceding that "Defoe's hero is instantly and universally recognized in his goatskin clothes, an archetype of modern heroic individualism and self reliance", he emphasises that "Robinson is [also] an individualized personality, an individual and not simply a type".<sup>52</sup>

Later, in 2008, Richetti re-examined Watt's definition of "formal realism" and suggested that Defoe's work contains an amalgamation of the ordinary and the fantastic.<sup>53</sup> He argued that Defoe's "realism" lies not in his "particulars of experience" in the sense of "human biological facts [but] in his vivid evocation of individuals as they examine the conditions of their existence and explore what it means to be a person in particularised social and historical lives".<sup>54</sup> Again stressing the hybrid form of *Robinson Crusoe*, he calls the work "the extraordinary tale of an ordinary man".<sup>55</sup>

Whilst many of the above interpretations are based on Defoe's novels, more recently scholars have included an assessment of his non-fiction, acknowledging the amount he wrote apart from the longer narratives and setting out to appraise his overall achievement as a writer. This is a key change in the way Defoe's work has been viewed.

Particularly significant has been the Pickering Masters series. In the 1990s Furbank and Owens began commissioning a number of editors of individual volumes and publishing everything they considered Defoe wrote, with the exception of some of his political journalism. By 2009 the edition had reached nearly fifty volumes and it included all Defoe's

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<sup>51</sup> Eagleton, *English Novel*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>52</sup> Richetti, *Crusoe*, pp. ix, xv.

<sup>53</sup> Richetti, *Defoe Companion*.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

poetry, satire, history and travel writing as well as the novels and his major journalism in *The Review*. Their stated aim is to show the “interconnections between his various writings”.<sup>56</sup> The project has provided an opportunity for experienced Defoe scholars to take a fresh look at his achievements, since each work in the collection has been newly edited.

Owens acknowledged that not everything Defoe wrote was of the same high standard. Assessing Defoe as poet he says, “although Defoe wrote poetry all his life, it was in his earlier years that he was most famous and prolific as a poet. He was not a great poet, but he wrote two great poems – *The True-born Englishman* and *A Hymn to the Pillory* – and a number of good ones”.<sup>57</sup> Editing *Jure Divino* for volume two of the same edition Furbank says the poem “suffers from serious weaknesses”; sometimes it “takes off and acquires real vividness and momentum [...] but [Defoe] is not, like Dryden and Pope, a master of reasoning in verse”.<sup>58</sup> For the modern reader the near eight thousand lines of this poem are indeed hard going. Nevertheless, some critics, notably J. Paul Hunter, DeAnn DeLuna and Andreas Mueller, are working to rehabilitate Defoe as a poet, especially as a writer of verse satire.

In 2000, assessing the importance of “trade” to Defoe and setting out to reveal the ideas that motivated him, John McVeagh stressed the complexity and extent of Defoe’s writings on this subject. “If we add to the word ‘trade’ related terms like ‘commerce’, ‘manufacture’, ‘money’ and ‘credit’ we are left with the biggest subject of all [that Defoe] wrote about”.<sup>59</sup> McVeagh

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<sup>56</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Political and Economic Writings*, 8 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), I, *Constitutional Theory*, ed. P.N. Furbank, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Satire, Fantasy and writings on the Supernatural by Daniel Defoe*, 8 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003), I, *The true-born Englishman* and other poems, ed. W.R. Owens, p. 15.

<sup>58</sup> *Satire, Fantasy etc.*, II, *Jure Divino*, ed. P.N. Furbank, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Political and economic writings*, VII, *Trade*, ed. John McVeagh, p. 1.

considered that in this connection “Defoe’s writings were significant because they describe and evaluate the growth in commercial activity during that period and the historic shift in the technical and moral evaluation of commerce that it brought about”.<sup>60</sup> Citing *A Brief Account of the Present State of the African Trade* of 1713, he also noted that in Defoe’s writings on this subject, “party politics, struggles for power and profit and commercial aspirations are all mixed up together”.<sup>61</sup>

A much briefer undertaking than the Pickering Masters edition, but also significant, was the *Cambridge Companion to Daniel Defoe*, edited by John Richetti and published in 2008.<sup>62</sup> This again allowed key Defoe scholars, other than those who had contributed to the Pickering Masters, to re-appraise his work. The most interesting chapters, by Backscheider, Novak and Richetti himself, present a complex view which sets Defoe in the context of his time and emphasises the individualism of his characters, but also applies modern interpretive tools to his work. This leads to a different perspective on some of the preoccupations of earlier scholars.

In the Introduction, focusing initially on Defoe the novelist, Richetti argues that he was a “major figure in the history of [the novel’s] development”. Taking an all-encompassing view of Defoe’s writing, Richetti then suggests that the modern approach “acknowledges that the ‘novels’ represent only a small fraction of what Defoe wrote [and that] they are in fact enriched by being placed in the context of Defoe’s non-fictional writings, those political, social, economic, and moral works that occupied him for many years”. He is here at one with the aims of Furbank and Owens.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>62</sup> Richetti, *Defoe Companion*.

Richetti sees Defoe's modernism in the isolation of his characters, arguing that "reality with all its uncertainties arrives through the medium of individual perception and experience". Crusoe's "isolation [...] can be taken as a metaphor for how modern realism such as Defoe pioneered tends to operate". He also sees the impact of "reader response" theory in, for example, the passage where Crusoe realises he alone of all his comrades is alive. In Crusoe's "referral to 'a thousand gestures and motions which I cannot describe'", Defoe asks the reader to imagine them, "thereby pointing to the contract between narrator and readers in which the latter do some of the crucial work of picturing reality".<sup>63</sup>

Backscheider identifies some key features of Defoe's work, then emphasises his contradictory character, offering incisive comments on the "conflict" theory. She argues that "at that meeting point that is identity, we know that he struggled for most of his life to buttress his image of what he wanted to be and sometimes believed he was".<sup>64</sup> Placing him in his historical context she says, "much of Defoe's writing is so compelling because he was poised at the moment in time when religious certainty gave way to modern scepticism and empiricism, when fideism yielded to an obligation to test and question". Like Richetti, Backscheider sees the significance in the novels of the acquisition of identity; they often demonstrate "problems of identity clashing with reality".<sup>65</sup>

Novak examines "Defoe's political and religious journalism", again exploring his achievement in the context of the "volatility of the time".<sup>66</sup> He paints an interesting picture of sectarian and contentious religious and political agendas, finally deciding on the primacy of Defoe as proto-novelist. "Defoe is fascinating to read as a mirror of his age [although] it was

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. pp. 1, 3, 122, 125.

<sup>64</sup> Richetti, *Defoe Companion*, p. 20.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>66</sup> Richetti, *Defoe Companion*, p. 27.

through his literary efforts, through *Robinson Crusoe* and some of his other fictions, that his journalism would be remembered”.<sup>67</sup>

Whilst seeing his work as a whole brings out a coherence in Defoe’s ideas, the range and variety of his writing does not lend itself to examination in relation to any one ideology or literary theory. There are two major exceptions to this. *Robinson Crusoe* has become a key text for post-colonial scholars and Defoe’s work has been studied extensively by feminist critics.

Seemingly endless twentieth-century interpretations of *Robinson Crusoe* include scrutiny of Crusoe’s behaviour on his island as exemplifying arguments interesting to scholars of post-colonial history. James Joyce famously described Crusoe as the “true prototype of the British colonist, as Friday (the trusty savage who arrives on an unlucky day) is the symbol of the subject races”.<sup>68</sup> As Edward Said put it, “the novel, as a cultural artefact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other”.<sup>69</sup> Focusing mainly on the nineteenth-century novel, and influenced by the theory of Georg Lukács, Said argued that “the novel is inaugurated in England by *Robinson Crusoe*” and that the work of later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novelists are “related to what Defoe so presciently began”.<sup>70</sup> In 2001 John Richetti, responding to Joyce’s description, rather than to Said, stated, “Defoe’s book does not simply offer that prototype as a given but rather records the development of that imperial personality in Crusoe”.<sup>71</sup> In 2008 Owens traced the celebration of Defoe as colonialist from a positive slant in the mid-nineteenth century through the more critical tone of Joyce’s comments to the later twentieth-century tendency to see the work as “propaganda” for new

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>68</sup> “Daniel Defoe”, ed. and trans Joseph Prescott, *Buffalo Studies*, 1 (1964), 24-25.

<sup>69</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 84.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>71</sup> Richetti, *Crusoe*, p. xxviii.

and existing colonialisation. He argued that “the representation of colonial developments in [Defoe’s] novel is much more complex than is implied by ‘propaganda’”.<sup>72</sup> After emphasising the self-mockery with which Crusoe refers to his monarch-like behaviour on the island, he says, “there is no hint in the novel that Crusoe is a tyrant, or even a would-be one. [...] Tyranny [...] is inextricably bound up with ‘divine right’ delusions and the pretence that kings are gods, and there is nothing of this in Crusoe”. In conclusion Owens says, “It is right, therefore, that we should find Crusoe’s power fantasies innocent and half-appealing. They are fantasies, that, it is implied, we might have had ourselves, in his shoes”.<sup>73</sup> Imperialism being now discredited, Richetti and Owens understandably wish to defend Defoe against a charge of supporting it. This is problematic, however, as Defoe was writing at a time when imperialism was incipient and to him the opportunities it presented were positive.

Defoe wrote two extended narratives in the female persona, *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *Roxana* (1724) and two tracts concerning marriage, *Religious Courtship* (1722) and *Conjugal Lewdness* (1727).<sup>74</sup> He referred to the social position of women in other non-fictional writings. How have his works been seen by feminist commentators? Can he be called a feminist? In 1977 Miriam Lerenbaum challenged Watt’s view that Moll was “essentially masculine”.<sup>75</sup> Lerenbaum goes on to argue that Defoe organised *Moll* by taking “cognizance of Moll’s roles as young woman, wife, mother, thief, pioneer [...] by correlating the stages in her aging process with crises in her personal life.” Each stage, she says, is separated by

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<sup>72</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Novels*, I, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. W.R. Owens, p. 29.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>74</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders* ed. G.A. Starr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Daniel Defoe, *Roxana* ed. J. Mullan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Daniel Defoe, *Religious Courtship* ed. G.A. Starr (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006); Daniel Defoe, *Conjugal Lewdness* ed. Liz Bellamy (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006).

<sup>75</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 118; Miriam Lerenbaum, *Moll Flanders: “A Woman on her own Account”*, in *The Authority of Experience: Essays in Feminist Criticism*, eds Arlyn Diamond, and Lee R. Edwards (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), pp. 101-117.

impasse, illness, inertia and a new career initiated with “energy and optimism”.<sup>76</sup> Women writing on Defoe have expressed significant insights into the relationship between his “non-fiction” and his “fictional narratives”. Speaking of Defoe’s treatment of sex in *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* Shirlene Mason states, “In his didactic works Defoe concentrates on the sin and its live consequences. In his fiction he puts the sin in the context of an evil situation in which sin is unavoidable if the person involved is to survive”. She also argues that “Defoe has a real blind spot regarding marriage” and that he wanted “improved conditions for women” but “states that women should be subordinate to a man. [...] His fictional women, although they are independent, are social outcasts”. Yet *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* show that “women, even in adverse circumstances, can often do very well on their own”.<sup>77</sup> In other words, Defoe does not accept the logical outcome of the position he takes. Whilst the fact that Moll and Roxana are “social outcasts” can be seen as a criticism of contemporary society, Mason accurately implies that in relation to feminism, Defoe’s ideology was conventional. In his first full length book, *An Essay upon Projects*, Defoe argued among other “projects” for an “Academy for women”. He says, “Not that I am for exalting the female government in the least: but, in short, I would have men take women for companions, and educate them to be fit for it”.<sup>78</sup> This is often quoted as an example of his “feminism” and placed alongside Roxana’s diatribe against marriage. Defoe clearly recognized that female capacities could never be fully exploited in a patriarchy, but Mason is right when she says he believed that women were subordinate to men.

Katharine Rogers argued that Defoe was a feminist because “in stead of scolding women for their weaknesses he explicitly laid the blame on a male-dominated society”.<sup>79</sup> She found

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>77</sup> Shirlene Mason, *Daniel Defoe and the Status of Women* (St. Albans, Vermont: Eden Press Women’s Publications, Inc., 1978), pp. 97, 103-4.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An Essay Upon Projects* (London, 1697), pp. 302-3.

<sup>79</sup> Katharine M. Rogers, *Feminism in eighteenth-century England* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), p. 62.

further proof from his *Review*, *The Family Instructor*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Conjugal Lewdness* where Defoe showed “candid recognition of friction between spouses”.<sup>80</sup> In other words, Defoe is able to see things from the point of view of a woman, even if not able or willing to suggest ways in which her lot may be made easier. *Moll Flanders* and *Roxana* show Defoe as a feminist to the extent that he could see the difficulties of life through the eyes of women. He also saw the social benefit of educating women differently, but did not suggest a way of changing society so that women could operate on equal terms with men. The underpinning values of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century society are explored, but not challenged in his work. This is not surprising from the author of *The Poor Man’s Plea*, in which he argued for the importance of a social *status quo*. After all, changing women’s role in society would involve changing the role of men, perhaps too high a price to pay.

In 1990 Carol Houlihan Flynn examined the matter again. Looking at Defoe’s “conduct manuals and tracts” she argues that he presents a “strong case for domestic harmony ‘mutual subordination’, and affective individualism that depends in fact upon feminine compliance to the demands of patriarchy”.<sup>81</sup> Comparing *Roxana* with *Moll Flanders* she says, “In this more complex treatment of sexuality, Defoe makes explicit the costs of the sexual economy Roxana and Moll attempt to master, refusing Roxana the fictional freedom over material circumstances”. The drift of Flynn’s argument is towards evidence of the power of patriarchy. Again highlighting the different positions Defoe takes in his conduct books and his fiction she says, “While Defoe argued in *Conjugal Lewdness* that matrimony is a state rather than a circumstance, in his fictional narratives, the circumstantial aspects of domesticity rule as arbitrarily as “the Invisible Hand” that “blasts” Moll’s happiness. She arrives at a similar conclusion as Katharine Rogers. Defoe explores the effect of

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>81</sup> Carol H. Flynn, *The Body in Swift and Defoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 41.

contemporary mores on women, but remains conservative in his support of the *status quo*.<sup>82</sup>

Slightly later, in 1993, Laura Brown examined “the systematic, unacknowledged connection between women and empire” and found Defoe far from a feminist. She argued that Roxana’s apparent murder of her daughter (woman killing woman) showed “a vehement repudiation of female liberty; [...] the text’s turn against the female mercantilist is also a turn toward a general misogyny”.<sup>83</sup>

A comprehensive exploration of Defoe’s work in the female persona is found in Madeleine Kahn’s 1991 work, *Narrative Transvestisism*, in which she develops her theory that “the novel was [...] the very embodiment of the chaos that this age still quite openly and vehemently identified as dangerously female”; in their adoption of the female narrator Defoe and Richardson “both affirmed the power of the female voice and usurped or co-opted that power”.<sup>84</sup> Kahn goes beyond a feminist debate to consider the nature of identity. She reveals the fragility and contingency of ideas such as maleness and femaleness. She compares Roxana to the transvestite, “an ephemeral third gender which is not limited to either male or female role, but has access to both”.<sup>85</sup> And again, “Roxana is not a woman; she is Defoe’s other, a construct which allows him to complete himself and so to express that self in narrative”.<sup>86</sup> Kahn draws on psychological and structuralist theory in order to explore the fact of Moll’s and Roxana’s sexuality, rather than taking a purely feminist position.

Considering *An Essay upon Projects* and *Conjugal Lewdness*, written at the beginning of Defoe’s life and in his late period respectively, Novak concluded that they expressed his belief “in women’s equal capabilities [and that this] was a basic tenet of his life”.<sup>87</sup> In

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 75, 87.

<sup>83</sup> Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 156.

<sup>84</sup> Madeline Kahn, *Narrative Transvestisism: Rhetoric and Gender in the Eighteenth-century Novel* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 54.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>87</sup> Novak, *Master of Fictions*, p. 68.

assessing Defoe's feminism, we need to include an examination of his attitude towards patriarchy. George Starr, in his 2006 introduction to *Religious Courtship*, suggests that "Defoe is a forerunner of the sentimentalists in dramatising crises in which roles must be temporarily reversed, so that the dominance of fathers, husbands and masters can be reaffirmed on a more humane basis, rather than relinquished".<sup>88</sup> As Starr hints, and as the above commentators showed, Defoe's attitude towards women is enmeshed in his perception of social organisation. Whilst he could see that society as a whole could be bettered if the lot of its female members were improved, like many of his contemporaries he believed that maintaining the *status quo* was preferable to the chaos which would ensue if it were disturbed. This makes him more empathiser than feminist.

The main critical issues having been tackled, recently commentators have been concerned to address what they see as gaps or under-emphases in Defoe scholarship. Defoe's attitude towards government, and especially monarchy, continues to arouse differences of opinion. In 1991 Manuel Schonhorn argued that Defoe's grasp of contemporary politics had been seriously overlooked and that Defoe was not in fact "modern", but in favour of a controlling monarchy with God-given powers. He claimed that Defoe's "political ideas [...] rested on a form of Old Testament foundation" and wished to counter the tendency of modern scholars to "commend [Defoe] because he anticipated *our* future rather than because he mirrored *his* present and *his* past".<sup>89</sup> Schonhorn sees a dichotomy in Defoe's political ideology. Referring to Leonard Krieger's 1980 work, *Kings and Philosophers: 1689-1789*, Schonhorn concedes that Defoe lived in "an age of strange attempts to reconcile political languages that were

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<sup>88</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Religious and Didactic Writings*, IV, *Religious Courtship*, ed. G.A. Starr, p. 16.

<sup>89</sup> Manuel Schonhorn, *Defoe's Politics: Parliament, power, kingship, and Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. ix.

hostile to one another”.<sup>90</sup> Thus “that Daniel Defoe was a strong supporter all his life of England’s constitutional monarchy and her mixed government, and particularly, of William III and the Revolution of 1689 cannot be denied”.<sup>91</sup> But Schonhorn also argues that “Defoe saw English liberty endangered by the grasping power of the new parliamentary interests. [...] To the very end of his life Defoe’s king remained the equipoise of England’s balanced constitution and the linchpin of a stable political society”.<sup>92</sup> Schonhorn develops this through an analysis of *Robinson Crusoe* in which he finds a significant political dimension, Crusoe’s behaviour typifying an absolute monarch. Nine years later Furbank and Owens published their edition of Defoe’s political and economic works. In this Alan Downie examines Defoe’s attitude to contemporary party politics, arguing that Defoe “accepted a doctrine of government by consent, and the notion that the monarchy was limited or ‘mixed’, rather than one which was absolute because it was based on indefensible hereditary right, passive obedience and non-resistance”.<sup>93</sup>

Recently greater attention has been given to the technical aspects of Defoe’s writing. Taking a more serious overview of his output has led to an appreciation of his achievements as a writer. It has taken some time to extricate Defoe from the way his contemporaries saw him and early critics found it difficult to see any skill in his writing. But as early as 1979 David Blewett discerned an alternative to the view that “as an artist, Defoe has been thought to be unconscious of his role”.<sup>94</sup> In 1987 Richetti published an assessment of Defoe in which he asserted that “the traditional view that Defoe was a careless journalist who happened to write a couple of books with touches of narrative originality” had been “refined”.<sup>95</sup> Novak argued

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.110.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.161.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp.161-2.

<sup>93</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Political and Economic Writings*, II, *Party Politics*, ed. J.A. Downie, p. 21.

<sup>94</sup> David Blewett, *Defoe’s Art of Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. ix.

<sup>95</sup> Richetti, *Defoe*, p. viii.

against the view that Defoe never corrected his work and was unaware of the effects he created. He says Defoe, “sometimes revised his manuscripts extensively and worked hard at producing well-crafted, energetic prose fiction”.<sup>96</sup> John Mullan addresses this in the introduction to his 1996 edition of *Roxana*. Discussing Defoe’s prose style he says, “this implicit sense of Defoe as a rough and ready story-teller whose sentence structures need refinement was established in eighteenth-century editions [...] and continued in the several nineteenth-century collections of Defoe’s works. Even today, the texts of Defoe’s fiction that are read and studied are frequently, and silently, revised”.<sup>97</sup> Mullan sees Defoe’s style as evidence of his realism, showing how Defoe’s sentence structure and punctuation “allows us to have a sense of a story being told even as we read – being organised as well as the narrator can manage, but not better”.<sup>98</sup>

The “traditional view” identified by Richetti also had its origins in Watt’s interpretation. Whilst he admired Defoe’s achievement, Watt had contended that Defoe was not always conscious of the effects his work produced. Related to this is the question of the extent to which Defoe intended his work as ironic. Critics have differed in this matter. In his examination of *Moll Flanders* Watt conceded that the work “has a few examples of patent and conscious irony” but none of the “structural irony which would suggest that Defoe viewed either his central character or his purported moral theme ironically”.<sup>99</sup> Much later, examining Defoe as a novelist, Richetti had said, “if, however, an intelligence or a covert sensibility can be found operating behind his limpid narratives, then the problem [of how we interpret Defoe] is fairly solved. Defoe becomes an ironist at least and perhaps a moral

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<sup>96</sup> Richetti, *Companion*, p. 42.

<sup>97</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Roxana*, ed. J. Mullan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. xxv.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

<sup>99</sup> Watt, *Rise*, pp. 125-127.

intelligence of a high order”.<sup>100</sup> For Terry Eagleton, writing thirty years later, this was still an issue. Of *Moll Flanders* he says, “the moral of the story – crime doesn’t pay – is blatantly contradicted by the outcome”; after giving other examples he says, “the gap between these values, and the facts presented by the fiction, is almost laughably apparent [to the extent that] some critics have wondered whether Defoe is not at times being deliberately ironic”. He goes on to argue that, “it doesn’t really matter; (how can we know anyway?). [What is important is] what one might call the objective irony of the situation”. In Defoe’s protagonists he considers that “moral values are mostly quite ineffectual”.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps irony is more difficult to spot accurately in Defoe’s long narratives, where he is, as it were, in free fall, allowing himself to speculate on the practical implications of the moral and social theory which is expressed more directly in his non-fiction. His irony is more readily identifiable in his political works not least because he often labels them “Satyr”. Furbank has no doubt that when writing political pamphlets Defoe could and did use irony. He cites the three Defoe wrote between February and April 1713: *Reason against the Succession of the House of Hanover, And what if the Pretender should come?* and *An Answer to a Question that No Body thinks of*.<sup>102</sup>

The question of the relationship between “fact” and “fiction” in Defoe’s work has exercised modern commentators. George Starr reminds us that this was a problem for Defoe too, given his distrust of the imagination, and not just that “genres” have changed. In 2008 Starr notes how Defoe identified “his own fabrications as fables – a genre that was morally edifying and therefore respectable despite being patently fictional – and trie[d] to dissociate them from the pernicious untruths that arouse[d] his wrath”.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Richetti, *Narratives*, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Eagleton, *English Novel*, p. 28.

<sup>102</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Political and Economic Writings*, I, *Constitutional Theory*, ed. P.N. Furbank, p.32.

<sup>103</sup> Defoe, *Novels*, III, *Serious Reflections*, ed. G.A. Starr, p. 25.

From being seen as clumsy and lacking artistic awareness, Defoe is now hailed as a supreme exponent of the appearance of reality. John Mullan re-examines the matter in his 2009 edition of *A Journal of the Plague Year*.<sup>104</sup> Describing it as a “brilliant factual fiction”, he goes on to note that the work “seems particularly modern [because] it is a narrative concerned so consistently with the effects of stories. The novel lives in its anecdotes, and its narrator’s assurance that he could tell us many more stories”.<sup>105</sup> Noting how an appreciation of Defoe’s style has changed he says, “what was once thought the awkwardness of a hasty prose style now seems dramatically appropriate. [...] As ever, what Defoe cares about catching is the appearance of truthfulness, and the inadequacy of his storyteller is the truest fiction of all”.<sup>106</sup> Owens echoes this when he refers us back to Walter Scott, who, he says, recognized that “Defoe’s novelistic method is one that is designed to produce the *appearance* of truth [and that] Defoe’s novels belong to what might be called a genre of deception”.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, Defoe is applauded for his erudition. Introducing his edition of *The Political History of the Devil*, Mullan comments that, among its other qualities, this work, “is a corrective to the assumption that Defoe was an unlearned, unbookish writer, quick with proverbial or anecdotal wisdom, but uninterested in textual authority”.<sup>108</sup>

Commentaries on Defoe remain contradictory. For instance there are differences of opinion as to his “originality”. Novak felt that “he was neither an original nor a profound thinker, and his main excellence as a writer was his sense of the importance of external objects and his

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<sup>104</sup> Defoe, *Novels*, VII, *A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. J. Mullan.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7,12.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>107</sup> Defoe, *Novels*, I, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. W.R. Owens, p. 22.

<sup>108</sup> Defoe, *Satire, fantasy [etc.]*, VI, *The Political History of the Devil*, ed. J. Mullan, p. 20.

willingness to describe an event with detailed accuracy”.<sup>109</sup> Conversely, Furbank and Owens considered that despite the vast amount he wrote, “[Defoe] had a number of favourite theories and principles, some of them of considerable originality, and they are discovered equally in his writings on trade, finance, religion, and politics and in his novels”.<sup>110</sup> Whilst Novak consistently finds a moral sincerity in Defoe’s work his overall assessment of Defoe is different from that of Furbank and Owens. Again, D. Christopher Gabbard, writing in 2004, has argued in relation to *Roxana* that far from showing Roxana’s capability to manage her finances, the text actually shows her incapacity to read accounts.<sup>111</sup>

Commentators still emphasise the importance of context. Novak rightly warned that for a just interpretation of Defoe’s work at any given time we need to take account of when and for whom he was writing. Even here there are differences. After illustrating his reasons for disagreeing with Novak over how to evaluate Defoe’s late works, George Starr concludes, “the topicality of *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* therefore seems to me broader, both chronologically and thematically, than Novak suggests”.<sup>112</sup> The widely differing interpretations of Defoe’s work are also possible because his output was substantial and varied and written over a long and volatile historical period

Disagreements in interpreting Defoe’s work can arise from his own self-contradictions. Looking at a specific work in isolation makes possible an interpretation of the writer at a given moment; but elsewhere we may find him expounding a different point of view. For

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<sup>109</sup> Novak, *Nature*, p. 157.

<sup>110</sup> Defoe, *Political and Economic Writings*, I, *Constitutional Theory*, ed. P.N. Furbank, p. 3.

<sup>111</sup> D. Christopher Gabbard, “The Dutch Wives’ Good Husbandry: Defoe’s *Roxana* and Financial Literacy”, *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 37 (2004), 237-251.

<sup>112</sup> Defoe, *Satire, Fantasy [etc]*, VIII, *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions*, ed. G.A. Starr, p. 39 7n.

example, in *Roxana* he seems to find the consequences of a lack of response to the workings of conscience too terrible to describe and brings the work to an abrupt end; in *The Complete English Tradesman*, however, begun the following year, he can say, “there may be a time when even the needful duties of religion may become faults, and unreasonable, when another more needful attendance call [sic] for us to apply it”.<sup>113</sup> This is one reason why he so infuriated his contemporaries. They expected him to be predictable and he was not. Perhaps today we can more readily accept that one writer can encompass contradictory positions without the disintegration of personality.

The previous emphasis on the conflicting and repetitive features of his writing has nonetheless given way to a view of his *oeuvre* as coherent. There are three possible reasons for this. First, Defoe’s work has benefited from a broader view of his literary contribution than exclusively as a proto-novelist. Secondly the historical context in which he lived and wrote has been the subject of much research, which has affected our perspective of him. Twentieth-century scholarship has also led to greater bibliographical, and therefore biographical, clarity as the basis for understanding and interpreting his works.

Finally, I should like to consider the question of genre. Even though there have been changes in the way we understand this term, categorising Defoe’s works can still be problematic. Owens and Furbank confronted this in editing the complete works, organising them into volumes on the basis of genre. There are occasional overlaps, for instance between “satire” and “political” groupings. Regarding the novels, they include *A Journal of the Plague Year*, which, as John Mullan shows in his introduction, is an imagined work. They end with *A New Voyage Round the World*, normally considered a travel book rather than a novel. Extensive

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<sup>113</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman*, I (London, 1725), p. 102.

scholarship has shown the instability of genre, particularly in Defoe's time. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* persisted to its 1995 edition in describing Defoe's longer narratives as "romances".<sup>114</sup> At a stretch, one might so label *Moll Flanders*, because of its "happy ending", but the same could never be said of *Roxana*. Defoe, who worked so hard to persuade his readers that these tales were "true history", to distinguish them from the "romances" of his time, would have been mortified. The urge to categorise, it seems, even questionably, dies a slow death.

In sum, perhaps the most significant change in attitude towards Defoe is that his work is taken seriously. It now seems generally acknowledged that he was a perceptive analyst of human behaviour as evident in his depiction of a wide range of contemporary issues and that he wrestled with the religious and secular impact of the shift from seventeenth- to eighteenth-century values. The brilliance of his writing in a variety of modes and styles is lauded, so that he is no longer seen only as a proto-novelist, although his contribution to the development of this genre is recognised and valued. If not quite a feminist in the full sense of the word, his capacity to observe critically and understand the social conditions of women is a necessary precondition for feminism. Because of the variety and amount he wrote it is possible to "prove" that Defoe subscribed to almost any point of view, especially if sourced from his long narratives, where his imagination is in free play, so that some critics have drawn weighty conclusions from a rather slim evidence base.

Since this thesis covers the two volumes of *The Family Instructor*, published in 1715 and 1718 respectively, a consideration of critical approaches to these works is now analysed. Not many scholars have discussed *The Family Instructor*. Those who have, tend to see it as a precursor of Defoe's later long narratives. Of the twelve contributors to *The Cambridge*

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<sup>114</sup> *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn, rev by Margaret Drabble (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

*Companion to the Eighteenth Century Novel* only two mention the work and then only briefly. Paula Backscheider refers to it in the context of the frequency with which Defoe quoted from the Book of Jeremiah.<sup>115</sup> John McVeagh cites the work as an example of the battle between Defoe's "idealism and cynicism" which exemplifies Defoe's "moral aims".<sup>116</sup> In their biographies, however, both Paula Backscheider and James Sutherland mention the work. Backscheider sees it in the context of Defoe's life, drawing parallels between the recalcitrant teenagers of Volume I, especially the impenitent elder son, and Defoe's own son, Benjamin. She notes that in Volume I Defoe stresses the benefits of family worship, stating that by this stage, "Defoe had worked out a portrait of the ideal master [who] teaches his extended family religion and sets a good example. Those in such a family learn their duty to God and each other and live in exemplary harmony. The self-control of the master seems to be a major factor in his control over the others".<sup>117</sup> She notes the recent marriage of Defoe's daughter, Maria, and that a major theme of Volume II is "the adjustment newly married people must make and the establishment of a virtuous, happy family life". Backscheider stresses the resemblance between "some of the dialogue" in *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe*, notably that of Toby in the former and of Friday and Will Atkins in the latter. She argues that "the responses of these innocents [...] are identical". She further suggests that "the natives and children often become the instruments for the salvation of their families, and especially in the conduct books, the narrative becomes strikingly sentimental".<sup>118</sup> James Sutherland seems to agree with this last point, stating that for many modern readers the work will be perceived as "a mawkish and unpleasant book", noting its "marked exaggerations [and] sentimental tone".<sup>119</sup> He connects it with Defoe's *An Appeal to*

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<sup>115</sup> Richetti, *Defoe Companion*, p. 13.

<sup>116</sup> John McVeagh, "Defoe: satirist and moralist", in Richetti, *Companion*, p. 212.

<sup>117</sup> Backscheider, p. 424.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 424-426.

<sup>119</sup> Sutherland, pp. 213, 211-12.

*Honour and Justice*”, published earlier in 1715, suggesting that “a severe illness - one that had really frightened him – will help to account for the marked Puritanism of *The Family Instructor*”. However, he also draws parallels between the work and Defoe’s later fiction, arguing that “he had come even nearer to fiction in the prose dialogues of *The Family Instructor*”. In contrast to Backscheider, however, he discounts any personal family connection, especially between Defoe’s elder son Daniel and the eldest son in *The Family Instructor*, this episode “being only one of the many domestic dramas that Defoe deals with in the book”.<sup>120</sup>

Richetti, in his biography, also mentions the work. He emphasises the fact that, despite their inaccessibility to modern readers, the dialogues “can be said to possess a narrative and dramatic form that is independent of their moralistic content”.<sup>121</sup> He also finds the work “related thematically to Defoe’s novels”.<sup>122</sup> In an early work looking primarily at Defoe’s understanding of “Nature”, Maximillian E. Novak groups *The Family Instructor* with Defoe’s other “didactic works” in an examination of the writer’s “psychological realism”.<sup>123</sup> Here Novak argues that characters in these works “differ from those in the novels in that they seem to be overwhelmed by passions which complicate and intensify their relationships with their families and friends”. His main argument relates to Defoe’s “fiction” and the relatively unsatisfactory portrayal of psychology therein, despite clear evidence of Defoe’s psychological understanding in the “didactic works”. He concludes that the reason for this is that “his major concern [in the novels] was more moral than psychological”.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., pp. 243, 256.

<sup>121</sup> Richetti, *Life*, p.162.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>123</sup> Novak, *Nature*, p. 130.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., pp. 130, 132, 136.

Later Novak offers a reappraisal of Defoe and reconsiders *The Family Instructor* as an example of fictional innovation.<sup>125</sup> Comparing this work to Defoe's novels he says, "Defoe seems to have understood the importance of an appearance of authenticity in a first person account of events just as he understood the immediacy of the dialogue form" which he uses in *The Family Instructor*. Novak argues that Defoe "had apparently grasped that the real attractiveness of the first volume was its modern setting in a real Britain". "Defoe was now ready," he says, "to expand in the direction of fiction". Thereafter Novak discusses *Robinson Crusoe* in particular, but also *Captain Singleton*, showing "how closely Defoe's novels were tied to his moral dialogues". He argues that "Defoe seems to have understood the importance of the appearance of authenticity in a first person account of events just as he understood the immediacy of dialogue". Again he argues, "some of the introductions to the stories have all the feel of a novel".<sup>126</sup> J. Paul Hunter briefly considers *The Family Instructor* as an exemplar of "the guide tradition", emphasising how this work differs from others in the genre.<sup>127</sup>

A scholar who has worked extensively on *The Family Instructor*, particularly from a bibliographical perspective, is Irving Rothman. Rothman has edited the two volumes of *The Family Instructor* for the Stoke Newington edition of Defoe's works.<sup>128</sup> Between 1973 and 1976, in a pre-computer age, Rothman set out to establish the number of extant copies of the first edition of *The Family Instructor* by examining the catalogues of the British Library and the Boston Public library and by writing to sixty-nine university libraries across the world.<sup>129</sup> In 1980 he argued that this census showed "the work had been read to tatters [which explains]

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<sup>125</sup> Novak, *Companion*, pp. 41-7.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45, 46, 59, 44.

<sup>127</sup> Hunter, *Pilgrim*, pp. 44-7.

<sup>128</sup> *The Stoke Newington Edition of the Works of Daniel Defoe*. General editors: Jim Springer Borck, Maximillian E. Novak, John G. Peters, Irving Rothman, Manuel Schonhorn (New York: AMS Press, 2003).

<sup>129</sup> Irving Rothman, 'Defoe Census of *The Family Instructor* and *The Political History of the Devil*,' *Notes and Queries*, 221 (1976), pp. 486-92.

the relatively few copies extant in the world”.<sup>130</sup> He also argued that Defoe wrote the work as a response to the Schism Act of August 1714. This Act set out to enforce the Test Act (1673) which specifically denied the rights of Dissenters by insisting that Head Teachers had to “subscribe to the Sacraments of the Church of England and take Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy; religious instruction had to be the Catechism as set out in the Book of Common Prayer”. Rothman cites a number of pamphlets written by Defoe responding to this Act, notably *The Schism Act Explain’d; Wherein Some Methods are Laid Down How the Dissenters May Teach Their Schools and Academies as Usual, Without Incurring the Penalties of the said Act* (1714). In another of these pamphlets, *A Brief Survey of the Legal Liberties of the Dissenters* (c. May 1714), Defoe argues that the Dissenters “need to teach their doctrines in their own homes as a countermeasure to Parliament”. Rothman further states that getting the Rev. Samuel Wright to provide the introductory letter to *The Family Instructor* and Emanuel Matthews (the second publisher of the corrected version of the first edition) with his history of publishing Dissenting material, “suggest that the first audience for the book was to be found among the Dissenters”, despite Defoe’s claim in the preface to the first edition that the work is intended for members of the Church of England as well<sup>131</sup>. In his introduction to his edition of the work for Pickering & Chatto P.N. Furbank agrees: “It has been suggested, and very plausibly, that it might have been this Schism Bill which prompted Defoe to write his *Family Instructor*, which came out in January of the following year” (I, 15).<sup>132</sup> In 1966 *The Times Literary Supplement* published research by B.G. Ivanyi which also argued for seeing the work as a response to the Schism Act.<sup>133</sup> Conversely, Andreas Mueller,

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<sup>130</sup> Irving Rothman, “Defoe’s *The Family Instructor*: A Response to the Schism Act”, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 74 (1980), 201-20, (201).

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.212, 214, 216.

<sup>132</sup> The Rev. Samuel Wright was a prominent Presbyterian minister, whose Meeting House at Blackfriars was thronged whenever he was preaching. Defoe engaged him to write the Preface to the first edition of *The Family Instructor*, which was printed in Newcastle early in 1715. Wright was less than complimentary, especially about the quality of the printing, however; Defoe withdrew the work, had it re-printed in London and re-published it in September 1715, with his own corrections and minus Wright’s letter.

<sup>133</sup> B.G. Ivanyi, “Defoe’s Prelude to *The Family Instructor*”, *T.L.S.*, 7 April 1966 (p. 312).

who devotes a whole chapter to the work, suggests that Defoe would not have devoted such a long work to responding to an act which he knew would not be enforced. Mueller argues that the work was more likely to have been an expression of the general anxiety about the rise of popular Jacobitism around the time of Queen Anne's death. In the requirement of children to obey their parents, and in the second part of Volume I in particular (where masters are urged to give their apprentices the opportunity to share in family worship) Mueller sees Defoe "trying to present Hobbes' argument for obedience to 'firm government' [...] in a more popular and accessible form".<sup>134</sup> Ultimately, the reason why Defoe wrote this work, or indeed any other, must remain a matter of speculation. What matters is what the work tells us about Defoe's writing. J. Paul Hunter is right when he emphasises that the connection between *The Family Instructor* and Defoe's later "fiction" is one of approach. Discussing *Robinson Crusoe* specifically, he argues that "*Robinson Crusoe* speaks to the same concerns as do guide books, and it shares their theological and moral point of view".<sup>135</sup>

Chapter Two of this thesis explores the meaning of "Family". What did the idea of "Family" mean to Defoe and his contemporaries? A number of modern works have addressed this topic and some of these are considered in Chapter Two. Although scholars differ as to the date when the family changed all agree that an earlier form existed, which was a status-based, patriarchal grouping, based on the "household". The husband headed this family and was responsible for the welfare of all generations living in the house at any given time, including apprentices, servants and even visitors. This model gave way to the modern version – the "nuclear" family – which consisted solely of parents and children. Ian Watt and Laurence Stone suggest this model emerged in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century; Keith

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<sup>134</sup> *Positioning Defoe's non-fiction: Form, Function, Genre*, eds Aino Makikalli and Andreas K.E. Mueller (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), A. Makikalli, p. 144.

<sup>135</sup> Hunter, *Pilgrim*, p. 46.

Wrightson argues it was already in existence a century before this.<sup>136</sup> Lawrence Stone, best known proponent of this change, is studied in some detail. Stone traces the move to a more loving “nuclear” family through the rise of what he calls “affective individualism”: members of the family linked by generational kinship are notably affectionate towards each other. This is borne out in *The Family Instructor*, where there are several references to the father of Volume I playing with his youngest son. He also shows affection for his wife, as do the husbands and wives of Volume II (I. 13-14, 70; II. 109, 272-4). There are problems with Stone’s work, however. He is inclined to rely on literary sources for his examples, which undermines his argument. Furthermore, his focus is on the upper classes whose experience of family, as Keith Wrightson points out, was very different from that of the lower levels of society.

Randolph Trumbach concurs with Stone in seeing earlier and later models of the family, but argues that the later model is based on “egalitarian” values.<sup>137</sup> This is misleading, however; the protagonists of *The Family Instructor* never possess egalitarian rights. Gordon Schochet, in a work first published in 1978, explores the earlier model of family as the basis of politics.<sup>138</sup> He suggests that the change was from status-based to contractual relations, which “enshrined mutual rights as well as responsibilities”.<sup>139</sup> In defining the modern family as characterised by contractual relations, he thus conflicts with Wrightson’s view that this was a mark of the earlier family structure.<sup>140</sup> Schochet cites a sermon by William Fleetwood,

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<sup>136</sup> Watt, *Rise*, pp., 143-49; Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England: 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Penguin, 1979), p. 22; Keith Wrightson, p. 22; *English Society: 1580-1680* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) p. 79.

<sup>137</sup> Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: aristocratic kinship and domestic relations in eighteenth-century England* (New York, London: Academic Press, 1978), p. 3.

<sup>138</sup> Gordon J. Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Patriarchal Attitudes in Seventeenth-century England* (New Brunswick, USA, and London: Transaction Books, 1988) with a new introduction by the author. The first edition of this work was published in 1978.

<sup>139</sup> Schochet, *Authoritarian Family*, p. 84.

<sup>140</sup> Keith Wrightson, “Sorts of People in Tudor and Stuart England” in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550- 1800*, pp. 28-51, eds Barry J, and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1994) , p. 50.

however, which is significant in that it was published in 1705 and spells out the expectations of all members of the family.<sup>141</sup> As its title suggests, this latter work reflects the older model of the family.

There was clearly a connection between the older family model and patriarchy. The most famous proponent of this doctrine was Robert Filmer, who asserted that kings were initially fathers of families and that, on the basis of the fifth commandment, they had a natural right.<sup>142</sup> J.P. Sommerville explores the background to the reign of the later Stuarts by explaining the basis of the “divine right of kings” in the “law of reason”. He argues that “the notions that the law of nature is reason, implanted in man by God at the creation, that it is the rule of right and wrong, and that it is superior to any human law, were commonplace”.<sup>143</sup> He maintains that this was accepted by predestinarian Calvinists, Protestants and Catholics and was “held to be compatible with a Calvinist theology of grace”.<sup>144</sup> These issues were important to Defoe in that he was keen to demonstrate the significance of “reason” for his characters. Defoe’s presentation of family in *The Family Instructor* certainly reflects the transitional nature of the time. The father of Volume I is clearly responsible for the religious education of his apprentices and all fathers seem to want to hold on to their position when challenged by other family members. Nonetheless, the older young people in Volume I and the young wives in Volume II challenge this authority, and seem more like their modern equivalents, even though they come to sad ends if they cannot conform to the expectations of patriarchy.

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<sup>141</sup> Schochet, *Authoritarian Family*, p.4; William Fleetwood, *Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Consider'd in Sixteen Sermons* (London, 1705).

<sup>142</sup> Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha, or, the natural power of Kings* (London, 1680). The work was probably written between 1630 and 1640, but only published in 1680 in connection with the “exclusion crisis” (the attempt to prevent the openly Catholic James, brother of Charles II, from succeeding to the English throne). The work’s endorsement of authoritarian government was used to support absolutist rule.

<sup>143</sup> J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England: 1603-1640* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), p. 15.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Defoe's *The Family Instructor* is generally categorised as a conduct book and although this popular genre is examined in greater detail in Chapter Four, in this introductory chapter the nature of family set out in such works is discussed. Two key texts are Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* and *The Whole Duty of Man*, reputedly by Richard Allestree. It is worth considering the picture they paint of the contemporary family. Bayly's work is a book of devotional practice, with a range of prayers suited to all situations. Bayly seems to assume that the earlier form of family exists. However, though perennially popular (there were thirty-four editions to the end of the seventeenth century) it was originally published in 1613.

In its depiction of the family, *The Family Instructor* is closest to Allestree's work. Allestree describes a hierarchical social order, beginning with the monarch, which depends for its success on the fulfilment of the mutual duties owed at each level. The emphasis on "obedience" is reflected in other conduct books by writers from a range of religious positions, including one by William Darrell, a Jesuit. The conduct book seems therefore to cut across religions and to maintain its popularity. Allestree's work, though first published in 1659 - forty-six years after that by Bayly - ran to thirty-one editions by 1731, the year of Defoe's death.

Since *The Family Instructor* centres on the introduction of religious worship into family life, religion is a key element and Chapter Three of the thesis addresses this. To begin with, the chapter defines and explains a number of contemporary sects which are critical to the understanding of the work. In addition, Christopher Hill's work, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* is useful in terms of its definition of Puritanism, despite the fact that it refers to an earlier time than Defoe's. Many of the characteristics of "Puritanism" remained in the minds of Defoe's contemporaries, and seem to have been absorbed into

concepts such as Dissenter and Calvinist.<sup>145</sup> John Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* is also useful as the prime example of the Calvinistic practice of spiritual autobiography.<sup>146</sup> This work expresses the doctrine of "the elect", which is evident in *The Family Instructor* in the initial conversation between the father and his small son.

Emphasis has been placed on "Dissent" as this is thought to have been Defoe's own religious background. Elements of the biographies where his religion is discussed have therefore been noted, significantly those by Paula Backscheider and James Sutherland. All Defoe's biographers, with the exception of John Martin, underwrite his Dissenting upbringing. A seminal text is Michael Watts's three volume book, *The Dissenters*.<sup>147</sup> Volume I ranges over dissent from its origins in the sixteenth century to Methodism in the eighteenth; Volume II deals with nineteenth century expansion and Volume III late Victorianism and the decline of dissent. Watts confirms that the term was seen as pejorative, corroborating those biographers who assert that Defoe considered he was deliberately ill treated for his beliefs.<sup>148</sup> At times it seems that "Dissent" is a matter of interpretation. Watts takes the term to embrace all those who do not conform to the Church of England. Certainly although strictly the term does not attain its full meaning until the Restoration of Charles II and the passing of the Acts of Parliament which came to be known as the Clarendon Code, other respected commentators such as Isabel Rivers emphasise its existence before then.<sup>149</sup> Watts, Rivers and Sutherland describe Defoe as a "Presbyterian", without addressing the question of the exact nature of his Dissent. This has long been a matter for investigation. As early as 1941 John Robert Moore

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<sup>145</sup> Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London, Pimlico: Random House, 2003), pp. 2, 4-5.

<sup>146</sup> John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, eds J. Stachniewski . with Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

<sup>147</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters* 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-2015); I: *From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); II: *The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); III: *The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015).

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 4.

<sup>149</sup> Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the language of religion and ethics in England 1660-1780*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), I, pp. 91-101.

published research arguing that Defoe saw himself as a Presbyterian.<sup>150</sup> Suffice it to say, however, that he wrote against the High Church (of England) throughout his life.

Two other contemporary issues should be mentioned, since they also have a bearing on the work in question: “Comprehension” and Latitudinarianism. At various times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries moderate Dissenters thought they might be “comprehended”, that is, included, in the Church of England. This failed, however, despite the efforts of many high-ranking members of the Church of England. Tim Harris and Craig Rose describe disagreements which kept believers apart at the Restoration of Charles II.<sup>151</sup> Latitudinarianism had its sources in the seventeenth century. Like the Dissenters, Latitudinarians were small in number, but carried considerable influence. Isabel Rivers provides a definition. Latitudinarians wished “to reduce the Christian religion to a few plain essentially moral fundamentals, easily to be apprehended and put in practice by the ordinary, rational man”.<sup>152</sup> This stress on reason is evident in *The Family Instructor*, though Defoe insists on the importance of revelation in the Christian experience.

Most striking, however, is the resemblance of *The Family Instructor* to some contemporary sermons, in a sense, not surprising, since the conduct books of the time share the same religious standpoint. Defoe’s work mirrors William Fleetwood’s sermon, *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants* although this work emphasises that none of those mentioned in its title is due obedience by virtue of their position alone; they must deserve such obedience, not something which Defoe addresses.

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<sup>150</sup> John Robert Moore, “Defoe’s Religious Sect”, *The Review of English Studies*, 68 (1941), 461-467.

<sup>151</sup> Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660-1715* (Harlow: Longman Limited, 1993), p. 7; Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 170.

<sup>152</sup> Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment*: I, pp. 25-6.

Even more striking is the similarity between Defoe's work and the sermon delivered at the church of St. Lawrence Jewry in June, 1684 by John Tillotson.<sup>153</sup> The difference between the position of Defoe and that of Tillotson is over the matter of "grace". For Tillotson, Latitudinarian that he is, man will be rewarded after death according to his good works. Defoe states the Calvinist doctrine. No human being can influence the hereafter by good works; his salvation depends entirely on the freely given grace of God.

Two religious positions, Roman Catholicism and Dissent, instilled fear and panic among Defoe's contemporaries, demonstrating that religion had political significance. I have therefore consulted the writings of a number of political historians, both contemporary and modern, to examine these two strands; in both cases, history is the cause of the associations which these religions arouse. Catholics are estimated to have constituted no more than one per cent of the whole population of England at the time.<sup>154</sup> The threat they posed is surely disproportionate to their actual number. But Catholics had the misfortune to be connected in the public mind with revolt and the cause of the "Pretender", the son of the openly Catholic King James II. By some, James's son was thought to have a stronger claim to the English throne than William and Mary (Mary was James's Protestant daughter) or the later Anne, another Protestant daughter. Hence the uprising of 1715, when rebel troops, under the banner of the Earl of Mar, marched south, to place young James, the "Old Pretender", on the throne. This was an abortive uprising in part through the loss of the revenue with which to pay the soldiers through the recent death of Louis XIV, long thought to be "bankrolling" the Stuart cause for largely political reasons. Catholicism was therefore associated with absolutism, at a

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<sup>153</sup> John Tillotson, *The Works Of the Most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson*, 3 vols (London, 1735), I, pp. 479-91.

<sup>154</sup> See Watts, pp. 267-289, re. the numbers of Catholics and Dissenters.

time when the binding of the monarch to the will of the people as expressed in parliament was developing in England.<sup>155</sup>

Dissenters, on the other hand, representing about six percent of the population, were always associated with Oliver Cromwell and the regicide of Charles I. Though many were moderate Presbyterians, they were seen as potential troublemakers. This was Defoe's heritage.

Moreover, as Barry Coward points out, in the early Stuart period, "when the head of state, the monarch, was also head of the Church, religious nonconformity was not only heresy; it was treason".<sup>156</sup> Discussing the religious and intellectual changes during the reign of Queen Anne, Coward argues that the search for a religious "settlement" was more difficult and more problematic after 1660 than in the early 1640s.<sup>157</sup> There was less agreement about the form of the Church of England or about its relationship with the state. According to Coward, there were two major problems. First, if it was no longer the only protestant church should the Church of England remain close to the state and continue to play a political role? Second was the question of its relationship with Dissenters. Should they be "comprehended" within the Church of England or tolerated outside it? Coward also notes the growing secularisation through the "new sciences", and the emphasis on reason, very much an issue for Defoe in *The Family Instructor*. This suggests the connection between religion and politics, and the two were clearly intertwined for the hundred years or so after the Civil war. Several commentators address this.

Julian Hoppit agrees with Coward that religious fervour had subsided "by the early 1720s".<sup>158</sup> He states that "Religious pluralism was reluctantly acknowledged even within the heart of the

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<sup>155</sup> A later, equally abortive, attempt by "Bonnie Prince Charlie" to place James III on the English throne was made in 1745, to be mercilessly crushed at Culloden by the British Army.

<sup>156</sup> Coward, *Stuart Age*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 457-66.

<sup>158</sup> Julian Hoppit, *The New Oxford History of England: A Land of Liberty? England, 1689-1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 208.

church”.<sup>159</sup> Hoppit explores the connection between the Church and national identity, noting the significant presence and power of the established church in the community.<sup>160</sup>

In examining Defoe’s style in *The Family Instructor*, I have consulted a variety of texts, focussing especially on the “Conduct books” published in the early eighteenth century. Notably, some of these were published well before Defoe’s birth; for example, two influential texts, Arthur Dent’s *The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven* and Lewis Bayly’s *The Practice of Piety* first came out in 1611 and 1613 respectively. Perhaps this explains the backward-looking features of all conduct books. Taking account of Gertrude Noyes’ *Bibliography of 1937* and the later comments by Jaques Carre, this chapter acknowledges the move from conduct books to those on etiquette in the nineteenth century, by way of Frances Burney’s *Evelina*, and the works of Hannah More and Harriet Martineau. Also of help in comparing *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe* have been Pat Rogers’ commentary and Thomas Corns’ work on Milton’s language. Discussing Defoe’s “realism” has led to a consideration of works by Erich Auerbach and Wayne Booth.

In conclusion, attitudes towards Defoe’s work have changed significantly since the beginning of the twentieth century. Ian Watt’s influential work first linked *Robinson Crusoe* with the recently translated essay by Max Weber on the “Protestant work ethic”.<sup>161</sup> Watt also identified Defoe, together with the later Fielding and Richardson, as a founder of the novel. The resulting emphasis on Defoe’s “fiction” took precedence over all his other work, discussion focussing frequently on the extent to which his works showed a conscious irony. In the late twentieth century, however, due largely to the research of W.R. Owens and P.N.

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., pp. 208-214.

<sup>161</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 92; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans Talcott Parsons (London: G.Allen and Unwin, 1930).

Furbank, many works previously attributed to Defoe were de-classified.<sup>162</sup> As a consequence of this, and of *The Rise of the Novel*, in the 1960s and 1970s Defoe scholars began to argue that he was a more comprehensive writer than Watt suggested. This, together with the publication of Defoe's complete works, edited by Owens and Furbank for Pickering & Chatto, begun in 2000, have made possible a reevaluation of Defoe's literary work as a whole, enabling him to be seen, not merely as a proto-novelist, but as the poet, journalist, satirist and political writer he undoubtedly was.

The chapters of this thesis on Family and Religion, which explore Defoe's presentation of these two culturally significant aspects of contemporary life, argue that the content of *The Family Instructor* seems to lie between the former and more modern versions of the family and between Defoe's inherited "Puritanism" and his generally more tolerant view of humanity. This work closely preceded *Robinson Crusoe* and is often seen as a forerunner of the novels, perhaps because the focus of those looking at the work has been on the long narratives which follow. It is true that the work exhibits many qualities of the later long fictions and these are explored in Chapter Four, where the style of the work is also compared with *Robinson Crusoe*. Further, the classification of *The Family Instructor* as a Conduct Book leads also to an examination of this genre. A number of works of social and contemporary history have been consulted to try to establish the context in which *The Family Instructor* was written. Particular emphasis has been given to contemporary sermons because of the similarity between many and *The Family Instructor*, notably William Fleetwood's *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Consider'd in Sixteen Sermons*, published in 1705, and John Tillotson's fiftieth sermon, delivered at the church of St. Lawrence Jewry in June, 1684.

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<sup>162</sup> Furbank & Owens, *De-Attributions*.

## Chapter Two

### **The family: values and relationships**

Jerome McGann remarked significantly in 1985, that “poems are [...] time- and place-specific; historical analysis is, therefore, a necessary and essential function of any advanced practical criticism”. The same is true of any work of literature.<sup>1</sup> Roughly ten years earlier, Wayne Booth made a similar point.

That all literary interpretation is in this sense dependent on history [...] was obvious to the great originators of the rediscovery of close textual analysis: I.A. Richards, William Empson, the American New Critics, the ‘Chicago school of neo-Aristotelians’. The first generation were historically trained, and they used their knowledge of history often quite explicitly (and, if I am right, *always* implicitly) whenever they read a poem.<sup>2</sup>

Part I of *The Family Instructor*<sup>3</sup> was published in 1715 and Part II in 1718. This chapter sets out to reconstruct the social context of families in the period. It aims to show how the family values and relationships Defoe portrays exemplify both a former and a more modern type of family, and that these two types are often in conflict. The earlier form of family was a patriarchal grouping, organised on the basis of a “household”, with the husband at its head and responsible for the welfare of all generations, servants and even visitors within this household at any given time; the modern version is what we now usually call the “nuclear”

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome J. McGann, “The Text, the Poem, and the Problem of Historical Method” in *The Beauty of Inflections* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), pp. 111 – 32, pp. 122-3.

<sup>2</sup> Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor*, Volume I (1715) and Volume II (1718); Daniel Defoe, *Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, gen. eds W.R. Owens and P.N. Furbank (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006). I and II ed. P.N. Furbank. All references are to this latter edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

family, a group linked by first generation kinship only, thus usually a married couple and their children.

How do the families Defoe portrays in *The Family Instructor* typify either of these models? Specific family values and relationships are articulated in this work. Where do these come from? In order to make valid literary judgements about *The Family Instructor* we need first to be able to identify, and if possible to understand, those values and relationships.

Over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries social historians have examined this subject and we should consider their arguments and conclusions. Commentators who have likewise explored the impact of such historians upon literary works are worth examining as well. Between 1953 and 2003 Ian Watt, Ronald Trumbach, Laurence Stone, Gordon Schochet and Keith Wrightson have all written about the family and their views will be considered. They disagree as to the date when the older family gave way to the more modern version and they are not fully in accord about what characterises either, but all consider that there was such a change.

We should also look at contemporary, primary sources to see what assumptions are made about the family. First, there are the major ideologues, like John Locke and before him, though not influential until the late seventeenth century, Robert Filmer. We need to decide how important they were for the ordinary citizen and most significantly, for Defoe's readers. What, if anything, did Locke and Filmer say about family values and relationships? Other contemporary sources include periodicals and newspapers as they reflect day-to-day priorities.

Because *The Family Instructor* is about the instigation of family worship in a hitherto ungodly household the relationship between the family and religious practice is an issue. What can we learn from primary sources about specifically religious attitudes towards the

family? What family values and relationships are considered to be critical by writers of contemporary religious literature? These questions lead to an examination of sermons as well as conduct books, both aiming to promulgate a particular view of the family which is expressed in *The Family Instructor*, and similarly intended for the “ordinary” person. In an age which still retained elements of an oral culture, the sermon was a significant means of communicating with what we might call the general public. Conduct books had a similar function and were plentiful. Finally, we should examine the various families which Defoe presents in *The Family Instructor* and try, in the light of these investigations, to answer the questions posed above.

Modern scholars who have attempted to describe “the family” in or around 1715 suggest that, by the time Defoe was writing, the family had changed significantly. The earlier model of family as outlined in the opening paragraph of *The Family Instructor* is status-based; the husband’s responsibility originates in his position, not through any intrinsic ability. Ian Watt cites Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha* and Gregory King’s *Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England, 1696*, as his sources for the earlier type of family.<sup>4</sup> Discussing “love and the Novel” Watt argues that “it seems likely that in the seventeenth century the traditional and patriarchal family pattern was by far the commonest. The term family [...] refers to a whole household and often includes grandparents, cousins, and even remoter kin, as well as servants and other employees [...] The family in this larger sense was the primary legal, religious, and economic unit, under the control of the

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<sup>4</sup> In the 1690s Gregory King published ‘*A scheme of income and expence of the severall families of England calculated for the year 1688*’. Although this table has since been shown to be inaccurate, as Coward points out, Julian Hoppit argues that “its organisation is rich in significance.” He goes on, “No less significant, however, was [King’s] use of the family as the primary unit of social analysis, by which he meant the wider household of resident kin and servants.” Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689-1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 72-3.

paterfamilias.”<sup>5</sup> Although Watt bases his analysis on this thought, his phrase “it seems likely that” suggests a degree of uncertainty. Gregory King devised his tables as a basis for the monarch’s taxation. His social structure has in any case more recently been shown to be faulty. Barry Coward, for instance, maintains that Geoffrey Holmes has “systematically confirmed” that

King did much less research on this aspect [i.e. the social structure] of his work than on demography and national income and wealth, which were more directly connected with his prime aim of providing the government with a statistical basis for levying taxation. Moreover, ‘guesswork abounds in King’s enumeration’, especially of incomes which are gross under-estimates. Above all, King, by basing his estimates on the year 1688, ignored many of the important changes taking place in society at this time.<sup>6</sup>

In time, argue social historians, the family became closer to the type we recognise, consisting of the husband, wife and children, the “nuclear” or “domestic” group. Keith Wrightson argues, however, that this nuclear or domestic family type, with or without servants, was in evidence by the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that it did not emerge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as Ian Watt and Laurence Stone have suggested.<sup>7</sup>

Stone is nonetheless one of the best known proponents of the thesis that there was a move from the patriarchal to the modern family. He argues that there was a decline of authoritarianism and paternal structures, which gave way to what he terms “affective individualism”, namely the growth of loving relationships between husbands, wives and children originating in the decline in absolute monarchy. Stone famously suggested a “critical

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<sup>5</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Coward, *Stuart Age*, p. 485.

<sup>7</sup> Keith Wrightson, *English Society: 1580 – 1680*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. 76-7; Laurence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England: 1500 – 1800* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Penguin, 1979).

change [...] from distance, deference and patriarchy to [...] affective individualism [...] perhaps the most important change in *mentalite* to have occurred in the Early Modern period, indeed possibly in the last thousand years of Western history”. He went on to itemise “the four key features of the modern family”, which he saw emerging over this period, as “intensified affective bonding of the nuclear core at the expense of neighbours and kin; a strong sense of individual autonomy and the right to personal freedom in the pursuit of happiness; a weakening of the association of sexual pleasure with sin and guilt; a growing desire for physical privacy [all of which] were well established by 1750 in the key middle and upper sectors of English society”.<sup>8</sup> Defoe’s *The Family Instructor* does exemplify some of these characteristics. For example, there is clearly a loving relationship between the father of the first part and his youngest son (I. 13-4). Similarly, the maid reports that the “Friend” of Volume II is “mighty merry, for he was playing with one of the Children” (II. 70). The first husband and wife are also shown to be affectionate towards each other and this in general typifies all the married couples in the work. Where Defoe’s family parts company with this modern model, however, is in its attitude towards the individual. All family members, even older children on the brink of adulthood, must conform with the requirements of the *paterfamilias*.

Whilst Stone’s interpretation of historical data has been challenged since 1979, he does make a useful proviso in his introduction. He points out that English society is not homogeneous and therefore when looking at changes which have taken place between 1500 and 1800 we need to recognise that they did not apply universally to all sectors. He says, “attitudes and customs which were normal for one class or social structure were often quite different from

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 178, 22.

those which were normal in another”.<sup>9</sup> We are reminded that we need to be careful in locating Defoe’s family in the social structure of the time.

A problem with Stone’s analysis is that he is often reliant on works of literature for his evidence, seemingly failing to recognise that these are works of the imagination and therefore not necessarily accurate portrayals of current social attitudes. Whilst it can be demonstrated that context and lifestyle as expressed in literature can indeed reveal behaviour and thus characteristics of social status, we must be wary of interpreting any imagined work as social “evidence”. To do so assumes that works of imagination always serve the same purpose, that they are written with a common aim and that their author is entirely in control of the creative process. The unreliability of the author’s expressed intention is well known. Discussing early novels, often cited for their picture of “real life”, J. Paul Hunter warns that “although they are, in themselves, a kind of social history – an attempt to record contemporary life and write its story according to some coherent pattern – novels are also players within the culture, agents as well as portrayers. Novels sometimes reach for radical or reformist ideals through their didactic tendency. They try to make things happen as well as reflect what has already happened; they embody rhetoric as well as representation”.<sup>10</sup> If *The Family Instructor* is a work of the imagination, similar strictures are applicable. Further, Keith Wrightson criticises Stone’s focus on the upper, elite layers of society, arguing that their experience of family was not typical of the lower layers.

Randolph Trumbach, writing in 1978, also described the patriarchal model of the family before outlining the newer version. The older model’s

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<sup>9</sup> Stone, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> Hunter *Companion*, p. 30.

basic assumption was that at the head of each household stood a man who in his roles as master, father, and husband owned his wife, his children, his slaves, his animals, his land. The authority of a master over his household was the model for all dependent relations, including that of king and subject. Many men were the property of other men; and all women and children.<sup>11</sup>

Trumbach concurs with Stone in seeing a change in this model, claiming with Watt and Stone that it took place “in the late seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries”. He states that “there occurred a shift from a patriarchal to an egalitarian or domestic system of household relations” over this period. The term “egalitarian” is misleading. It suggests an equality which is not synonymous with “domestic”. If this model of the family is “egalitarian”, Defoe’s exemplifies the earlier model; none of his protagonists in *The Family Instructor* could be said to have “egalitarian” rights. Rather the reverse.

More recently, in 1988, Gordon Schochet examined the seventeenth-century family as the basis of politics, in particular, the relationship between paternal and patriarchal authority.<sup>12</sup> Schochet sees the origin of these ideas in the Reformation, referring to the “new role the family occupied after and because of the Reformation [...] As the authority of priests was reduced, that of lay household heads was correspondingly elevated”. Schochet cites Christopher Hill and J.G.A. Pocock among his sources. Although his analysis is slightly tangential to my present purpose, Schochet emphasises the earlier, patriarchal family as “an authoritarian institution in which great power was concentrated in its patriarchal head”. He argues that, however, in practice the family in Stuart England was less rigid. “Disobedience and rejection of fatherly authority were not uncommon.” Schochet suggests that the change in the family from status-based to contractual relationships, which “enshrined mutual rights as

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<sup>11</sup> Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: aristocratic kinship and domestic relations in eighteenth-century England* (New York, London: Academic Press, 1978), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon J. Schochet, *The Authoritarian Family and Patriarchal Attitudes in Seventeenth-century England*, with a new introduction by the author (New Brunswick, USA and London: Transaction Books, 1988), pp. 57, 64, 71, 84.

well as responsibilities [...] marks the emergence of mass society in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries". To illustrate this change he cites William Fleetwood.<sup>13</sup> Schochet's description raises questions about the characteristics of the earlier and the modern family. His assertion that the modern version "enshrined mutual rights as well as responsibilities" conflicts with Keith Wrightson's view that "older models of the social order persisted [...] together with their accompanying insistence upon order, subordination and mutual responsibility".<sup>14</sup> However we respond to these definitions, what is clearly apparent in Defoe's work is the presence of a *paterfamilias* who should be obeyed, as well as a "nuclear" family characterised by affections. Mutual responsibilities surface in the bringing up of children, which Defoe sees as the work of both parents. Individual rights, where asserted, are denied, for example in the case of the two older teenagers in Part I of Volume I. Their rejection of paternal insistence on reforming their lifestyles leads to misery, and, in the case of the son, to death. Likewise, the wives of the opening sections of Volume II, who assert the right to think and behave differently from their husbands, all come to miserable ends if they are unable to conform.

Since *The Family Instructor* is usually categorised as a conduct book it is worth examining the values expressed in such works to see whether Defoe's resembles or differs from them. The conduct book was a perennially popular genre. It abounded before and during Defoe's lifetime, continuing well into the nineteenth century. According to Gertrude Noyes, who examined over four hundred such works in 1937, seventeenth-century courtesy and conduct books had their origin in the Italian idea of nobility. When such nobility became

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<sup>13</sup> William Fleetwood, *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Consider'd in Sixteen Sermons* (London, 1705), pp. 385-6.

<sup>14</sup> Keith Wrightson, *The Middling sort of People*, eds Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brookes (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 28-51, 50.

unsustainable by birth, it becomes necessary to maintain it through education, and hence through the writing of guidebooks which tell prospective “gentlemen” what constitutes gentility. “If it is not birth that makes the gentleman, it must be education”.<sup>15</sup>

In 1986 Sylvia Kasey Marks stated, “But before we examine Richardson’s transformation of the conduct book [...] a survey of its origins, development, content and form is in order”.<sup>16</sup>

She confirms that,

Castiglione’s *Courtier*, an Italian work, marks the first significant courtesy work. His four dialogues are lessons in the requisite accomplishments and behaviour of the gentleman and lady in court. Castiglione and such French and Italian courtesy writers as La Rochefoucauld, Giovanna della Casa, and Baltassar Gratian were translated and adapted for English audiences. But England produced her own courtesy writers, too. Elyot’s *Governour*, for example, illustrates the practical and often specialised tendency of English courtesy literature. Elyot tells us *how* the great nobleman is formed and focuses on his education. [...] Thus the conduct book, the domestic household manual, and the vade mecum took their places alongside the older courtesy books to meet the requirements of a different kind of audience.<sup>17</sup>

Religious conduct books came to prominence in the latter half of the seventeenth century and they are very similar to one another. They tend to set out an ideal world which is based on family hierarchy, where each member has duties and obligations to those above and below them. Family members are fixed in their positions, ranked, with the husband/father at the top, the wives/mothers, sons, daughters, small children, apprentices and servants last. Concepts of “Duty” and “Obedience” are emphasised, especially in relation to wives and children.

Defoe’s work conforms to this pattern. It is clear that such works, with their emphasis on family worship in a “godly” household, might have special significance for Dissenters as a means of passing on their particular form of Christianity, when legally forbidden to teach

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<sup>15</sup> Gertrude A. Noyes, *Bibliography of Courtesy and Conduct Books in Seventeenth-century England* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1937), p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: the Compleat Conduct Book* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), p. 35. Sylvia Marks treats “conduct books” and “courtesy books” together.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35. See also, Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: a Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 62-5.

their young other than according to the Anglican doctrine. In fact, P.N. Furbank and Irving Rothman concur in a belief that Defoe wrote this “conduct book “ in response to the Schism Act (I. 15). Nonetheless, the religious conduct book was popular with various Christian denominations; as well as works written by Nonconformist Protestants, there are examples by Anglicans and Roman Catholics. It was clearly in the mainstream of moral writing. Whilst there remain different types within the genre, those dealing with family all make assumptions about its organisation, its relationships and values. It is worth considering Lewis Bayly’s *The Practice of Pietie* and *The Whole Duty of Man*, attributed to Richard Allestree, since, in Volume I of *The Family Instructor*, these two books, together with “a Prayer-Book”, were put on the elder daughter’s bookshelves by her mother in place of her playtexts and novels (I. 97). These also illustrate the popularity and the ubiquity of the genre as their authors come from very different backgrounds.

First published in 1613 *The Practice of Pietie* is essentially a work of practical devotion with many explications of the Bible, instructions, meditations and prayers, covering the whole twenty-four hours, and behaviour proper to the Sabbath, in sickness and at death. It was clearly a popular work if judged by the number of editions. There were thirty-four up to the end of the seventeenth century, including several published in Amsterdam and Delft, and one in Welsh. In his “Meditations for Household Piety” Bayly refers to the “Householder”, urging that he should implement family worship and that “masters” should set good examples to their servants if they expect loyalty from them; no such loyalty can exist without this example. Bayly gives no definition of a “Householder”, however, or of any other member of the family, merely assuming such an organisation exists.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bayly, pp. 430-8.

Richard Allestree, a cleric and an Oxford academic, was an active Royalist during the Civil War. *The Whole Duty of Man*, first published in London in 1659, forty-six years after Bayly's work, seems also to have been popular; about thirty one editions appeared between 1659 and 1731, the year of Defoe's death. The work presents a picture of a hierarchical, stratified society, with different types of "parents" at each level.<sup>19</sup> The families portrayed in *The Family Instructor* seem to coincide with Allestree's view of the family. He emphasises "obedience" at each stage. Our "first Parent is the Monarch", says Allestree, who embodies "much of [God's] own Power and Authority", whose subjects "never dar[[e], upon any pretext whatsoever, to speak evil of the Ruler of our People". The Monarch is also due "Tribute", "Prayers" and, above all, "Obedience". Next in the hierarchy come the "spiritual" parents, that is the "Ministers of the Word", who are similarly owed "love", "esteem", "obedience" and "prayers". Thirdly are our natural parents, "the fathers of our flesh". They are owed "reverence" and "respect", but children have further obligations to them. They are to "conceal" their parents' "infirmities". Since children are "the Possessions of the Parent" they owe their parents love and gratitude for their care of them, but also, expressly, obedience. The worst form of disobedience is "marrying against the consent of their Parents". Re-iterating the commandment to "Honour thy parents", Allestree stresses that "no unkindness, no fault of the Parent, can acquite the child of this duty". Parents have concomitant responsibilities to "nourish" and "educate" their children, and, like Bayly, Allestree emphasises the importance of example. Parents should set a good example to their children through their own religious practice.

Allestree goes on to itemise the mutual duties of husbands and wives, again stressing the obligation for the wife to obey her husband, and, as with parents and children, "the faults of

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<sup>19</sup> Allestree, *Duty*, pp. 278-287, 291-328.

the husband acquits not the wife". The relative responsibilities of masters and servants are similarly structured, reflecting the parent/child relationship. Servants are to "obey" their masters and masters are bound to have a care for their servants' well-being and religious education. Whilst Allestree is not above using the Bible to frighten his readers into accepting his argument (there are many references to the Old Testament), he is also keen to emphasise the need for the power-holder to give "encouragement" as well as "correction" in the upbringing of his children, and similarly to give "encouragement" and "moderate commands" to his servants. Allestree's work presents a picture of a former social structure and, since in *The Family Instructor* Defoe presents this model as a desirable context for his argument, the subject matter of Allestree's work would reverberate forcefully for his readers. In stressing the *mutual* obligations of masters as well as servants, however, Allestree could be said to be a proponent of the more "modern" type of family. This would be the case were we to agree with Keith Wrightson's analysis.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, it could be argued that the family portrayed by Allestree is actually of the older order.

Allestree's emphasis on "obedience" is a key preoccupation, its importance echoed in many contemporary works. In a later piece, directed specifically at women, Allestree again stresses that a wife owes "Obedience" to her "husband", basing this on God's ruling to Eve.<sup>21</sup> John Mortimer, offering his *Advice to Parents [...] on the Education of Children* in 1704, is emphatic that the young should be trained to show "obedience" to "authority".<sup>22</sup> He also recognises the importance of gaining obedience rather by "Commendation and Disgrace, than by Rewards and Punishments", which, he argues, lose their effect over time.<sup>23</sup> In *God the Guide of Youth*, Defoe's school-mate, Timothy Cruso, emphasises the importance of

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<sup>20</sup> Wrightson, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Allestree (attrib.), *The Ladies' Calling, In Two Parts* (Oxford, 1673), II, p.33.

<sup>22</sup> John Mortimer, *Advice to Parents; or, Rules for the Education of Children* (London, 1704), p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.10.

obedience, making the link between God and parents; he says, “*such as obey their Parents in the Lord, do obey the Lord in their Parents*”.<sup>24</sup>

Barry Coward, writing in 1992, confirms the centrality of the idea of obedience, contending that it was enshrined in the earlier, Elizabethan constitution and that it permeated society. This would give credence to the idea that it characterises the older form of family. He asserts, “the doctrine of obedience was extended to relations between husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and employees, landlords and tenants”. And again, “The need for obedience was reinforced by the teaching of the Church in its role as a mouthpiece of government propaganda”.<sup>25</sup> He argues that it was this constitution which was overthrown in 1649 by the Cromwellian regime, but seemingly the ideas behind it continued well into the eighteenth century, or perhaps returned with the Restoration of 1660. Also influential in Defoe’s time were the works of Richard Baxter, who wrote in the Puritan tradition and whose works were certainly known to Defoe. Baxter offered his *Poor Man’s Family Book*, a recasting of Arthur Dent’s *The Plaine man’s Path-way to Heaven*, in 1675, and this again depicts the family as a microcosm of the world. Families are the “chief seminaries of Christ’s Church on Earth, and it is very much that lyeth upon them to keep up the interest of Religion in the world”. In conversation with “Saul”, “Paul” says, “If God be not the Master of your Family, the Devil will”. His reasons for promoting “Godly families” are that they will be more receptive to the Minister and will be able to put up a strong defence against “Rulers or Pastors that are bad”.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Timothy Cruso, *God the Guide of Youth* (London, 1695), p. 20. Cruso was a school friend of Defoe at Morton’s Academy and may have provided the name Robinson Crusoe.

<sup>25</sup> Coward, *Stuart Age*, p. 104.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Poor Man’s Family Book* (London, 1675), pp. 288-91.

Perhaps the most significant writer for our purpose here, however, is William Fleetwood (1625-1723), a near contemporary of Defoe and an Anglican Bishop, initially in London and later in Ely. His group of sermons entitled *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Consider'd in Sixteen Sermons* was first published in 1703. Editions emerged later in 1716, 1722, 1726, 1732 and 1753; then nothing seems to have been published until a facsimile of the first edition of 1703 in 1985. The sermons therefore seem to have been popular and influential in the eighteenth century at least. The work is significant because whilst it reflects the older order in its depiction of social hierarchy and the stress placed on the need for “obedience” owed by subordinates at each level to those above, it is “modern” in that the relationships between these levels are bound by mutual, contractual agreements. No-one who holds power within the pairs presented is due obedience by virtue solely of their position; they have to deserve such obedience. Fleetwood stresses this repeatedly. His first Discourse focuses on the duty owed by children to parents. After “loving” them as exhorted in the first commandment, their second duty is “respect. [...] All their Behaviour is to be submissive, dutiful and mannerly and such as becomes Inferiors towards their Betters”.<sup>27</sup> In Discourse IV however, he makes it plain that parents do not have an automatic right to obedience. He stresses the “reciprocal Duty” of each. A Parent must distinguish between “the Power and Authority” that nature gives him [and being] “unnatural to his children”. After outlining the necessity urged on parents and children to look after one another both materially and spiritually, Fleetwood turns his attention to the duties of wives to their husbands.

Arguing, in Discourse VII, that wives are naturally inferior to husbands, through lesser “strengths and abilities”, he sets out the crux of his argument, which, he asserts, is commanded “repeatedly” in the New Testament.

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<sup>27</sup> Fleetwood, *Relative Duties*, pp. 9, 86, 95, 169-176, 292-4.

Since all inferiours are commanded to be *subject* to the higher Powers, and Children to their Parents, Servants to their Masters, and Men to one another, as well as Wives to their Husbands, it will be needful for them to know in what particulars, the Wives must be in subjection to their Husbands; for a Subject cannot obey a King, nor a Son his Father, nor a Servant his Master, *in all things*; but each Superiour has his proper and peculiar sway, each inferiour has a Limited Subjection. There is something that sets out the bounds of every one's Power, and every one's Obedience.

He is careful to explain that no obedience can absolve perpetrators from their responsibility for their own actions, and that the first duty of all is to God. "Religion and good Morals claim the first place in [the Wife's] Obedience; no Command or Example of a Husband, will excuse a Wife of offending against a known Law of God, or doing anything immoral". Turning to the husbands, in Discourse XII, having introduced the injunction of Husbands to "love your Wives" as stated by St. Paul in Colossians 3: 19, he again sets out his plea for mutual obligation.

This is the foundation and bottom of our Obligation to pray to, or to praise, even God himself, for it is for Blessings only that we praise and pray to him. [...] It is impossible for one of [God's creatures], to have any Obligation to another, either to shew Love, or to do Service, but it must arise either from Gratitude or Thankfulness for something receiv'd, or from the hope and prospect of something good to be receiv'd. All duties of Mankind do therefore mutually infer one another; the Duty of a Subject to his Prince, does certainly infer the Prince's Duty to his Subject, [...] The Prince] must lay some Obligation or other on him, or he can ask no Duty *from* him [...] in the Relation of Parent and Child, there is an Obligation laid by one, as the foundation of the others Duty and tho' these are made Duties by Command of God, yet they are truly Duties in *Nature and Reason*, antecedently to any Laws or Commands of God.

What Fleetwood means by "Nature and Reason" will be explored later. Here the point is his emphasis on mutual obligation. He further states that frequently, "Princes, Parents, Masters, Governors, remember only the Reasons, and Commands that give them Power and Authority, and that exact Obedience, Love, and Service, to them; without remembering the Reason and Commands that oblige themselves to discharge their several Obligations, to their Subjects,

Children and their Servants, the very Reason and bottom of the others Duty”.<sup>28</sup> His argument runs on similar lines in relation to the duties of servants and “Masters”. He asserts, “Though Servants are to obey in all things, yet it is only in all things where they are at liberty to obey, by either the Laws of God, or by the Laws of the Land”. A Master has “no Authority to order a servant to behave so”. Yet masters should be “fair, good natur’d, and humane”. It is a mutual obligation.

Fleetwood is of his time in his insistence on the necessity for the social order which his hierarchy enshrines. He argues for some always to be “subordinate” to others, or “there will be nothing done, but mischief,” for, “where all will command, none will obey”. In the context of his advice to wives, he stresses that they would do well to “consider [that] Nature, Use and Custom, and Husbands” are all “necessary to the support of Rule and Order”. Similarly, the obedience of servants to masters “is very useful to the good and order of Mankind”. Although Fleetwood is concerned to maintain such order, his view of society is far from the former, patriarchal, status-based model.

In all the above works, however, the father figures significantly, as he does in Defoe’s work. Lying behind the ancient structure of the family, with its alliance between the father, the king and God, is the doctrine of the “divine right of kings”. This doctrine had its origins in the Old Testament, specifically in Ecclesiastes 8: 2-4, which states,

*I counsel thee to keep the king’s commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his sight: stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?*

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 295, 341, 344-5, 406.

The association of king and God is reflected in the literature of the time. In *Hamlet*, for example, Claudius invokes the “divinity [which] doth hedge a king” as a defence against the threatening anger of Laertes when the latter returns to avenge the murder of Polonius.<sup>29</sup>

Earlier, in *Richard II* (1597), Shakespeare had explored the paradox posed by the ineffectual, but God-appointed, king as against the politically astute and able usurper, Bolingbroke.<sup>30</sup> In

the succeeding reign of James I the relationship between monarch and people was also an issue which turned on “divine right”. Whilst acknowledging the personal nature of English monarchy, Barry Coward does not consider the matter of the “divine right” of the monarch.

He does, however, address the question of the extent and nature of the monarch’s power.

Discussing the relationship between monarch and parliament, in the context of absolutism, he says, “it can be too readily assumed that early Stuart kings wanted to get rid of parliaments.

There is no evidence for this”. He goes on to assert that,

in 1629, it is true, Charles I decided that the disadvantages of parliamentary government temporarily outweighed its advantages. He did not relish the prospect of meeting parliament again very soon and, not surprisingly after the stormy parliaments of 1626 and 1628-9, he wanted to rule without it for as long as possible. But there is no evidence that Charles I wanted to rule permanently without parliament.<sup>31</sup>

According to Godfrey Davies, who expresses an earlier interpretation of history, “Looking both backwards and forwards, there is no doubt that the relations of the early Stuarts with their parliaments were vitiated throughout by their firm belief in the theory of the divine right of kings”.<sup>32</sup> He goes on to point out that James I made clear his theory of kingship in a number of speeches including *The Trewe Law of Free Monarchies*, in 1598, and *The Workes*

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<sup>29</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, new edn, ed. Bernard Lott (London: Longman, New Swan Shakespeare: Advanced Series, 1970), Act IV, Scene 5, p.120.

<sup>30</sup> William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, ed. Peter Ure (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1956).

<sup>31</sup> Coward, *Stuart Age*, p. 103.

<sup>32</sup> Godfrey Davies, *The Oxford History of England: The Early Stuarts, 1603-1660*, ed. Sir George Clark 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), pp. 31-34.

of the *Most High and Mighty Prince, James*, in 1616.<sup>33</sup> “By a free monarch he meant one free from all control”. From the same source we gather that Charles I held similar, if less openly published, views of monarchy. “I must avow”, he said in June 1628, “that I owe the account of my actions to God alone.” While on trial for his life he was equally definite. “A king [...] cannot be tried by any superior jurisdiction on earth”. From the scaffold he declared that the people had “no claim to any voice in the government”. Glen Burgess, however, states that “the real issue was not the king’s prerogative, but the adequacy of the law [...]”. Charles I’s subjects accepted that the king had a prerogative but “the king had to accept that his prerogative was to be exercised through lawful channels”.<sup>34</sup>

By contrast, J.P. Sommerville devotes his opening chapter to the issue of “divine right” and supports his argument from a range of contemporary writings.<sup>35</sup> Sommerville teases out the question of the origin of the monarch’s power and links the idea of absolutism with religious as well as political concerns. He asserts that, “the doctrine that kings derive their powers from God alone was the orthodox teaching of the early Stuart clergy.”<sup>36</sup>

However, Glen Burgess takes Sommerville’s argument a stage further. He states that “Divine Right really was quite happily used to stress the absolute duty of subjection. There was nothing controversial about this [...]. There was, in short, no conflict between divine right of kings and the common law, or theories of Government by consent: they were used to address different problems in different contexts”.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> James I, *The Trewe Law of Free Monarchies* (London, 1598); James I, *The Workes of the Most High and Mighty Prince, James* (London, 1616).

<sup>34</sup> Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought: 1603-1642* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 212-14.

<sup>35</sup> J.P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England 1603-1640* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), pp. 9-56.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>37</sup> Burgess, *Politics of the Ancient Constitution*, p. 215.

The most significant contemporary proponent of the doctrine of “the Divine right of Kings” was Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653). Filmer was a supporter of Charles I, from whom he received his knighthood. A firm believer in absolute monarchy and an anti-Calvinist, he wrote a number of works on the theme of “divine right”. In 1648 he published *Anarchy of a Limited and Mixed Monarchy*, in response to a treatise by Philip Hunton arguing that the king’s prerogative was not superior to the authority of the houses of parliament. But it was his *Patriarcha, or, the natural power of Kings*, which offered the most explicit and fully argued version of the doctrine.<sup>38</sup> Written probably between 1630 and 1640, *Patriarcha* was published posthumously in 1680, in the reign of Charles II, in connection with the “exclusion crisis”, its endorsement of authoritarian government being used to support absolutist rule. When it was published, Defoe would have been about twenty. Like most writers of the time, Filmer accepts the Bible as literal truth. He takes it as the basis of absolute monarchy and of the social structure which supports it. He claims that *Patriarcha* was written in response to the popularity of the notion that “Mankind is naturally endowed and born with Freedom from all Subjection, and at liberty to choose what Form of Government it please: And that the Power which any one Man hath over others, was at first bestowed according to the discretion of the Multitude”. He takes issue with the proponent of this idea, the Jesuit Cardinal, Roberto Bellarmino (1542-1621). Filmer’s first chapter is entitled “That the first Kings were Fathers of Families”. He argues that even where the “Prince [...] come to the Crown by Usurpation, or by the Election of the Nobles, or of the People, or by any other way whatsoever; or whither some Few or a Multitude govern the Commonwealth: yet still the Authority that is in any One, or Many or All these, is the only Right and Natural Authority of a Supreme Father”. He also invokes the Decalogue, “To confirm this Natural Right of *Regal Power*, we find in the

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<sup>38</sup> Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha, or, the natural power of Kings* (London, 1680), p. 1, para 24.

Decalogue, That the Law which enjoyns Obedience to Kings, is delivered in the terms of *Honour thy Father*, as if all power were originally in the Father”. He concludes that, “If we compare the Natural Rights of a Father with those of a King, we find them all one, without any difference at all”.<sup>39</sup>

During the seventeenth century the general view of monarchy was to change significantly, and with it the relationship between monarch and father. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, published in 1689, John Locke took issue with Filmer, arguing against absolute monarchy.<sup>40</sup> His work thus also denies the link between father and monarch. J.P. Sommerville suggests that “*comparisons* between king and father were commonplace. Of greater significance was the group of statements *equating* royal with paternal authority”, because they aimed to show that “the king’s power derived from God alone” and that “the earliest political societies had not been self-governing democracies, but absolute monarchies ruled over by a king and father”. He later states, “The main conclusion of [...] patriarchalism was that the powers of every supreme magistrate derived *directly* from God and not from the people”. Sommerville shows that many ordinary writers of the time supported the idea of “an absolutist attitude to the origins of royal power”.<sup>41</sup>

It should be remembered that the ideas and changes outlined above predate Defoe’s *The Family Instructor*, the first volume of which, dated 1715, was published after the death of Queen Anne. J.P. Sommerville, Gordon Schochet and Keith Wrightson were all focusing on the early Stuart period. The cultural characteristics of the seventeenth century were significantly different from those pertaining a century later. Over the seventeenth century

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha, or, the natural power of Kings* (London, 1680), p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (London, 1690).

<sup>41</sup> Sommerville, pp. 31, 35, 46.

England had experienced the death of the early Stuart kings, one to regicide in 1649, the “interregnum” and the failure of the puritan experiment (1649 –1658), the re-institution of a monarchy (1660), temperamentally Roman Catholic, but outwardly espousing Anglicanism, the flight of James II, the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688, and the reign and death of Queen Anne (1702–1714). When Defoe published *The Family Instructor*, Hanoverian rule was a *fait accompli*, with a monarch unable to speak the language of his people. What seems to emerge from all this is that the values of the family were changing when Defoe was writing *The Family Instructor*, whenever we date the exact change from a patriarchal grouping to one based on contract or affection.

What in all these changes is Defoe’s position? What assumptions does he make about his readers? What is the family in his view? What should it be? The first assumption he makes is evident in his title page to Volume I. He divides the work into three parts:

I relating to Fathers and Children

II To Masters and Servants

III To Husbands and Wives.

He anticipates that the family includes the nuclear group – husbands, wives and children – but also, “Masters and Servants”. Later, he is specific. “If those who call themselves Christians or Protestants, will not instruct their Children and Servants, here they will find their Children and Servants instructing them” (I. 46). The Father is thus head of the nuclear

family but also responsible for servants. This responsibility together with the relationships evident in the dialogues suggests that the work cuts across both former and newer family structures.

That servants are part of the family is borne out later. In Part I of Volume I “Thomas” refuses to drive the elder son and daughter in the coach to the Park on Sunday, in obedience to the Father, and “Pru”, the elder daughter’s maid, is emotionally involved. We are given her description of the response of the parents when the elder son and daughter pretend to have disobeyed them by going to the Park and her anxieties for the outcome are cleverly transmitted to the reader, before we find out what happens. Apprentices are also to be included in the “family”. Part II of the first volume focuses on the two apprentices, Thomas and William. In the opening dialogue they find that they have been placed in two families which are at variance with their upbringing. Tom is unhappy because his adopted family does not practise religion in the home, as he has been brought up to do. By contrast, Will, whose upbringing has been devoid of religious education or practice, is placed in a family where religion is part of daily life. Initially, this irritates him, but in conversation with Tom he comes to see the significance of his lack of teaching and asks Tom for guidance, which the boy attempts to provide. The dialogues which follow explore the implications of Will’s conversion.

When we focus on the assumptions made about the structure of the family, the main feature is that the “families” here include the apprentices. Remonstrating with Will, Tom says, “is it not every Christian Man’s Duty to teach his Household and Family to serve God?” (I. 173).

Worried himself about failing to do his “Duty” in the irreligious family in which he has been placed he says, “God has said, *He will pour out his Fury upon Families that call not upon his Name*, Jer.10.25. And I am one of the Family now” (I. 174). Clearly the model here is that of the former family, where the “Master”, as Defoe puts it, should have “concern for the Souls

of his Servants” as well as for his blood relations (I. 181). This was clear from the “Notes on the First Dialogue” and is reiterated by Tom when he explains his absences to his own father (I. 200). Here again Defoe is explicit and what he says suggests his work is designed to persuade readers to re-instate a former practice, now lapsed. He bemoans the fact that “Duty of Servants is entirely neglected, even in those Families where they do regard Religion, and where instruction of Children is taken care of; as if the Souls of Servants were not under the Inspection of the Master of a Family, and were none of his Charge, as well as the Souls of his Children” (I. 182). The families portrayed here are clearly not real. In a sense this is no surprise. If *The Family Instructor* is classified as a “conduct book”, it shares with the genre the author’s desire to promote idealised, rather than actual, behaviour.

In the second dialogue of Part II, echoing the sixth dialogue of Part I, Tom finds some religious solace through the Mistress of Will’s family next door. There follows a conversation between Tom and his natural father, whose worries that his son is leading a loose life are put aside. In the third dialogue Tom’s father confronts his son’s master, the clothier, and the roles of paterfamilias in relation to children and apprentices and servants are clearly spelt out, “for a Master is a *PARENT*, tho’ he is not a *Father*” (I. 207). In the brief note to the third dialogue, after Tom has only partially accounted to his master for his absences with the family next door, Defoe again refers to the change in contemporary attitudes towards the role of the head of family, “How Custom has wickedly of late years seem’d to discharge Masters of this Duty” (i.e. of treating servants and apprentices as if they were their own children and including them in religious instruction and practice) (I. 213). He offers three reasons for this, namely, servants, in this case apprentices, have become too proud as a result of the large sums of money they bring to masters; secondly, parents have become negligent, failing to care for their children’s souls once they are apprenticed; and, finally, the masters themselves no longer see it as their duty. Although we might sympathise with the master’s

embarrassment, Defoe is scathing with regard to his reason for not instructing his apprentices, namely, his fear of being laughed at by his underlings. “We are easier”, Defoe says, “to be laugh’d OUT OF our Duty than perswaded INTO IT” (I. 214). To what extent is this a true representation of the requirements of the role of the Master? In the “Statute of Ordinances concerning Artificers, Servaunts, and Labourers, Journeymen and Prentices”, undated, but assigned to around 1550, the duties of apprentices are specified; but this document, not surprisingly given that it is a law, is written entirely from the point of view of the “master”. It spells out what is owed to him by the apprentice, the penalties for apprentices who do not complete their agreed term or labourers who take a day’s wages for half a day’s work, what “Servaunts” may wear and how much the master should spend on their clothing.<sup>42</sup> There is nothing about their obligations towards their apprentices or servants, and notably no mention of the necessity to give such hirelings a religious experience in the home. Where does Defoe get this from? I believe it to be an extrapolation from masters being *in loco parentis* and therefore having the same obligations and duties to their servants and apprentices as they would to their own children.

The relationship between biological fathers and masters of apprentices is explored in Part II of Volume I and the suggestion there seems to be that it relies more on status than affection. In the fourth dialogue the shopkeeper finds out from his neighbour (the clothier) the true reason for Tom’s going early and late to their house, finally acknowledging his own sinfulness in having neglected his duty towards his family and apprentices. What is significant here is the deference given to him by the clothier and his wife; he is the person taking precedence over them and over Tom’s natural father regarding Tom’s behaviour as an apprentice. Tom’s father says to the “Master”, “the Power and Authority of warning him, instructing him, reproofing him, restraining him, and, if need be, of correcting him, *is all*

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<sup>42</sup> *The Statutes or ordinaunces concernynge Artificers, Servauntes and Labourers, Journeyme and Prentises* (London, 1550?).

*yours*” (I. 205). He continues, “he is under your Family care, *as to his Body, he is your Servant*; but as to his Soul, *I think*, he is as much your Son as any Child you have” (I. 206). In the final dialogue, during the opening discussion between the shopkeeper and his wife, the wife shows her husband similar deference. The shopkeeper having discovered the true reason for Tom’s absence, declines to explain it to the wife, presumably out of embarrassment at the revelation of his own failings which must accompany it. She says, “*Nay*, if you are satisfied, I do not use to meddle, especially with *your Servants*” (I. 226). The discussion which follows further explores the role of masters of apprentices and that of natural fathers. During the preliminaries, however, the husband/wife relationship is revealed. She offers to “lighten [his] Load” (I. 227), exemplifying the “helpmeet” companion. Whilst she is entirely subservient to her husband, saying, for example, “I am none of those Wives that set up to teach their Husbands” (I. 229), eventually he confides in her and she makes plain her understanding that his duty includes all the functions of a natural father, not merely teaching his apprentices his business. The wife spells out clearly what is to be expected. Invoking “Scripture” she says, “Wives are bid to submit themselves to their Husbands; Children to obey their Parents; Servants to be subject to their Masters; all which naturally implies, that the Government of the whole Family devolves entirely upon the Head of the Master, who has the whole Charge of them, Soul and Body, and is accountable for their Miscarriages, so far as those Miscarriages are owing to the Omission of his Duty” (I. 230). This view of the world looks very like the one we find in Allestree. Biblical commandments about relationships are the reference-point and they are based on status rather than on the affections.

The portrayal of the father also cuts across past and current versions of the family. To begin with the father’s relationship with his little son, the youngest, who prompts his reassessment of his behaviour in the first place, is affectionate. This is suggested by their opening conversation. The child says that on one occasion when they did not go to church, his father

stayed at home and “play’d” with him (I. 65). The father frequently calls the child “My Dear” and there is a physical closeness between them. Early in their initial conversation Defoe says, “the Father Is mov’d with the Child’s Expression, and kisses him” (I. 50). Finally the Father says, “Come, *my dear*, thou wilt catch cold to be so long out, let us go in to your Mother” (I. 66). There is also an implied closeness between the child and his mother. The child says, “’Tis *my dear Mother*, and I love her dearly” (I. 65). In the second dialogue he is especially anxious about the possibility of losing his mother in death. He says, “Why, you must not die, *Mother*, you shall not die *Mother*, shall you? (*The Child weeps*)” (I. 77). This section suggests that Defoe is thinking of the more modern type of family, which was marked by affectionate relationships between parents and their children. Once the Father becomes aware of the neglect of his duty, however, he invokes a former version of the family, seeing himself as a *paterfamilias*, where status takes priority over affection. The verbs are telling here (my underlining). He feels he should have “exercis’d the Authority of a Father, and of a Governour of a House; to have set up the Worship of God in my Family; to have pray’d *with them and for them*, and instructed them to pray *for themselves*” (I. 87). Commenting on their elder brother’s unwillingness to comply with his father’s wishes, the younger remarks, “If my Father’s Reasons do not perswade him, *I can assure him* his Authority will, *for* he is resolved upon the thing” (I. 98). Similarly, in the confrontation between the father and his eldest son the father falls back on his authority. In the course of the discussion in which the father explains his change of heart and the consequent change in his expectations of his family, the father says to his son, “since I think your Business is to *obey*, and not to *dispute*, I desire no more of your Arguments, but expect to see my Orders observed” and later, “if you will not submit to *my Government*, you must quit *my Dominions*” (I. 134). Here is invoked the

unquestioning obedience described as appropriate by Richard Allestree and by William Fleetwood.<sup>43</sup>

Since parents are the basis of the new family, the way they relate to each other is crucial. In his “Notes on the Third Dialogue” Defoe gives us his understanding of an ideal husband-wife relationship. First emphasising his main theme, “to convince Parents of the Necessity of beginning early the great Work of instructing and managing their Children” (I. 91), he goes on to describe marriage as a mutually supportive relationship. Both husband and wife should “in their Turns be mutually able to assist, comfort, direct, and counsel one another” (I. 92). This he states is what is meant by “that Phrase, *AN HELP-MEET* [...] *tho’ understood by few*” (I. 92). He also says that he recommends this practice “from just Experience” (I. 93). Similarly, in Part II the wife of the shopkeeper, though she is Anglican and he a Dissenter, offers to “lighten the Load” which she perceives is burdening him, as he worries about Tom’s behaviour (I. 227-8). Whilst the “Help-meet” marriage was not itself new (Milton was, among others, an advocate), the notion of a mutually supportive relationship is closer to the modern view of marriage than that based on status.

The daughter of Part I becomes the wife in Part III. Again illustrating, among other things, that marriage should be a partnership, this wife is angered by what she sees is her husband’s failure to consult her before teaching their young children the principles of Christianity (I. 280). She accuses him of “taking all your Family Measures without consulting your Wife, as one not worth having her Consent asked in the matter, or rather not capable of giving it” and of treating her as no better than a servant “whose Business was not to join in making Orders but to submit to them when made” (I. 280). Their lengthy argument allows Defoe to develop

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<sup>43</sup> Allestree, *Duty*, p. 291; Fleetwood, *Relative Duties*, p. 9.

his theme. The husband maintains that “instructing our Children is the natural Work both of Father and Mother” (I. 283). The tension is clear, between an earlier type of marriage, based on status, and the more modern, shared relationship. Her husband says, in exasperation, “*My Dear it is a double Grief to me, to hear you say the Reason of your Dislike is from my Error in the Manner of introducing it; had I foreseen it, I would ha’ made no Scruple to ha’ laid down all my Authority as you call it as a Master, and ha’ begged of you to let it be done*” (I. 281).

Well before this, however, the affectionate marriage is portrayed as an ideal. The mother and father in the opening dialogue are emotionally close. He, “*being a very tender loving Husband*”, comforts her when he sees her distress (I. 85). He stresses that as she is his wife he has a “duty” to relieve “her affliction”, but that also, “I have but one Interest, one Wish, one Desire with you, and this not by Duty only, but by Inclination” (I. 85). Significantly, the role of the husband combines both “duty” and affection.

Part III, though returning to the first family, is directed “To Husbands and Wives” (I. 42). In the first two dialogues here, the elder brother and sister return to their estrangement with their parents, the girl concerned at the possible effect of the “breach” upon her intended marriage. In a stroke of psychological insight by Defoe, the daughter’s relationship with her father is carried into her courtship. It colours her response to a possible suitor. In her words, “the Ground and Reason of the Breach with my Father seems to me to be a plain Foundation of the like with my Husband” (I. 269). She tries to establish the extent to which she will be at “liberty” once married, saying, “I will never marry *as I said to be my Husband’s Cloistered Wife*, any more than I would stay at Home to be my *Father’s Nun*” (I. 270). Her aunt, though supportive of her, and keen on the marriage, takes her father’s part in the matter of

introducing family worship in his home. She says, “I love you very well, *but I have so much Respect for him also*, and above all so much Zeal for the keeping up the Face of Religion in Families” that she could not condone the daughter’s proposed opposition to family prayers in their marital home (I. 271). Later the daughter confronts her husband-to-be directly with examples of her possible antagonistic behaviour (I. 273). He accepts that she shall do as she pleases as long as he is also at liberty to pursue his own inclinations towards family worship and Sabbatarianism. Defoe was to address the matter of religion within marriage directly in *Religious Courtship* in 1722.

Marriage was a subject of great contemporary interest and there are many works dealing with it. There was already the assumption that “love” was a legitimate basis for marriage and also that there was still a conflict between love-matches and those based on money. For instance, Jane Barker in her preface to *Exilius: or, The Banish’d Roman*, emphasises the importance of love to a happy and enduring marriage. She says, “a Blessing from Heaven attends not on those who enter the holy State of Matrimony thro’ the Gate of Perjury, by vowing everlasting Love where their Affections scarce surmount Indifferency”.<sup>44</sup> The ancient practice of dowry-giving was still in operation, however, as Amy Ericson attests.<sup>45</sup> There is also the instance of the marriage of Sophia Defoe, the writer’s youngest daughter, and Henry Baker. Though Baker’s description of his courtship of Sophia suggests he loved her, he would not marry her till Defoe had sorted out a mutually acceptable financial “settlement” for her. In his account of his courtship of Sophia he tells us that “his Sophy would fill his Soul”, but he was clearly

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<sup>44</sup> Jane Barker, *The Entertaining Novels of Mrs. Jane Barker* (London, 1715). Preface, n. p.

<sup>45</sup> Amy L. Ericson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 96.

worried about the cost of marrying. After the long delay caused by this financial stumbling block they finally married in April, 1729.<sup>46</sup>

Mary Astell spells out some of the problems matrimony held for women of the time and there are similarities with Defoe's position.<sup>47</sup> At the outset Astell challenges the older, patriarchal basis of social organisation, which assumes a "natural" superiority of "all men" over "all women". She goes on, "if absolute Sovereignty be not necessary in a State, how comes it to be so in a Family?" Like Defoe, she states a belief that happy marriages are possible, "even very probable", provided both parties are "guided by Reason, and not by Humour or brutish Passion". Yet she recognises that in accepting a husband a woman "elects a Monarch for Life" over her.<sup>48</sup> And she considers that "meer Obedience, such as is paid only to Authority, not out of Love and a sense of Justice and Reasonableness of the Command" is unlikely to lead to a lastingly successful relationship. This suggests that for many women and men, marriage continued to run on patriarchal lines.

"Mr. Spectator" also had advice to offer on the way to achieve the most successful marriage. In the issue for 29 December 1711 the importance of marrying for lasting affection is stressed, as against marrying only for money. "[Love] puts the Wife or Husband in Countenance both among Friends and Strangers. A good Person does not only raise, but continue Love, and breeds a secret Pleasure and Complacency in the Beholder, when the Heats of Desire are extinguish'd".<sup>49</sup> On 7 January 1712, Mr. Spectator receives a letter from "Your Admirer, A. B.", referring to this "Discourse of the 29<sup>th</sup> December on Love and Marriage". A. B. writes of the need for wisdom of "choice" and warns not to expect "Happiness from things not capable of giving it". He castigates both men and women for

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<sup>46</sup> Henry Baker, *Autobiographical Memoranda*, Victoria and Albert Museum Library, Forster MSS, 48.D.4, pp. 13; 14-15, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Astell, *Reflections upon Marriage* (London, 1706), Preface, n. p.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 33.

<sup>49</sup> *The Spectator*, 29 December 1711.

putting “riches” before “the good Qualities of the Person belov’d”. If men and women would behave so, “we should not find Felicity in the Marriage State such a wonder in the World as it now is”. The assumption is that the wife should “divide his Cares and double his Joys” but also that she should “manage his Estate [...] with Prudence and Frugality, govern his House with Oeconomy and Discretion, and be an Ornament to himself and Family”.<sup>50</sup> This looks like the “companionate marriage” and the mention of the Estate suggests it applies to an upper-class couple as much to those of the “middling sort”.

*The Spectator* for 21 December 1711 contains a letter from “Lydia” to “Harriot” on the occasion of the latter’s marriage. A number of themes appear here, including the frequently rehearsed rivalry between “town” and “country”. Harriot is to be pitied for having “fall’n” and “chang’d” by being “carried down to an old Manor House in the Country, and confin’d to the Conversation of a sober Husband and an aukward (sic) Chambermaid”.<sup>51</sup> Lydia urges her to “come to Town” and offers “a little good Advice at your first Appearance under the Character of a married Woman”. The tone is satirical and underlines the frivolousness of urban entertainments which Defoe criticises in *The Family Instructor*. Harriot is not to be seen with her husband in public, nor are they to acknowledge each other “at the Play-House or Opera, unless you would be laugh’d at for a very loving Couple”. Lydia quotes “Mrs Modish” as saying Harriot is “a discreet Person, and qualified to manage a Family with admirable Prudence; she dies to see what demure and serious Airs Wedlock has given you”. Harriot replies in exemplary fashion, extolling marriage. “I am marry’d and have no other Concern but to please the Man I love; he’s the End of every Care I have”. She admonishes Lydia. “Matrimony and the Clergy are the Topicks of People of little Wit and no Understanding”. Significantly, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, who established *The Spectator* in 1711, were Anglican, educated at public school and university. This gives

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 7 January 1712.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 21 December 1711.

weight to the idea that such standards cut across social sectors. They were not the exclusive province of Dissenting moralists.

In Volume I Part III Defoe explores the extent to which children are subject to paternal government once adults. The essence of the daughter's objection to her father's sudden introduction of family worship is that she and her brother have been brought up with worldly priorities, albeit "not immodest or dishonest" (I. 270), and cannot therefore accept their parents' sudden switch to religious priorities. Explaining to her Aunt she emphasises that she and her brother consider themselves to be "past Schooling and Tutelage" (I. 270).. There are also references in contemporary periodicals. In the 1 January 1712 edition of *The Spectator*, for instance, there is a letter from a mother to her son "Frank", reminding him of her care and self-sacrifice for him when a "weakly Child" and of her current financial needs. He replies penitently "I will come down to Morrow and pay the Mony (sic) on my Knees", signing himself "Your most Dutiful Son".<sup>52</sup> The tone of both parties, however, allows for the possibility of emotional blackmail. Such a situation could be abused by the parent, here a widow, possibly with a "jointure" from her husband's will, which might have been perfectly sufficient to her needs. However, the point here is that children were subjected to the wishes of their parents throughout their lives and the daughter in *The Family Instructor* could be seen as incorrect in her assertion that they are too old to learn. The third dialogue moves into the future, when the daughter is married, although, despite her husband's efforts, she remains estranged from her parents and continues to enjoy many of her worldly pleasures, in particular "she could not perswade herself to like a regular kind of Family Government" (I. 277). Once they have left the family home and set up on their own he becomes a model *paterfamilias*, in a kind of coda on the father of Part I. With the initial help of a "minister" this husband introduces family worship, which includes his servants, into his home (I. 278).

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 1 January 1712.

At this point the wife reverts to her worldly behaviour, whilst he “resolved to go on in the Duties of a Master in his Family” (I. 279). Their resulting dispute assumes that mother and father should share the work of teaching their children to be good Christians, indeed, that they should agree on its importance, much like the parents of Part I. She sees his behaviour as a “reproof” to herself, “by taking all your Family Measures without consulting your Wife” (I. 280).

Who are the families in this work? Defoe is specific in his descriptions of the social status of the various families. Volume I focuses on the initial family group: father, mother, their smallest son who initiates the father’s “conversion”, “aged about six” (I. 47), a son and daughter in their early teens and an older boy and girl whose story continues in the last part. In the middle section, Part II, there are two families with apprentices. The fathers are mercantile men, a “clothier” and a “shopkeeper” and their wives. No children come into the narrative, though Defoe tells us both families have them. The emphasis is on the relationship between masters and apprentices and the roles and responsibilities of natural and surrogate fathers, “masters”. In Part III of Volume I we return to the eldest daughter of Part I, who has left home to live with her “aunt” and is the potential wife of the uncle’s son, by a former marriage. The focus of this Part is “husbands and wives”, and Defoe concentrates first on the courtship and marriage of this daughter. We are also presented with Sir Richard, who, we learn eventually, is the brother of the mother of the first Part.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> If Sir Richard is an aristocrat, this woman has aristocratic connections. Defoe is not clear about this and we can never be sure. If Sir Richard were a baronet he would be a landed gentleman and therefore an aristocrat. All we know for certain is that he has enough social standing to be required to attend the “quarter sessions” (see II. 74).

Positioning the family in this work as accurately as possible in the social scale is important because its values are articulated; they are central to Defoe's argument.

Social status is therefore significant. In response to her husband's sharing his guilt about his failure to instigate family practice in the home, the first wife replies that she would have supported him sooner, but that she thought it "meer Ostentation, and Form, as if none but Persons of Quality should have Prayers in their Family, and thought it look'd too big for us" (I. 87). Her husband responds in similar vein. "If I was a *Nobleman* I would keep a Chaplain, but I was asham'd to pray in the Hearing of my Servants and Children, as if that was dishonourable and mean, which was my natural Duty" (I. 87). In the final part, the daughter's husband introduces family worship with the help of a "Minister", but one who is visiting, not a permanent member of the household (I. 278). The upper class, when they are introduced into the work, are identified with immorality. Before leaving home, the eldest daughter in Part I goes to the theatre with "my Lady *Light-head*" (I. 250). Once married she continues to do so and to gamble. Her father reports to her husband, "I hear she lost 50 *l.* at Sir *Anthony's* a few nights ago" (I. 291). He calls the man, "the Rakishest Fellow in the Town" (I. 291). When repentant and sick she refers specifically to "*Sir Anthony* and my Lady *Light-head*" as the "Engines in the Hand of the Devil" who have led her astray (I. 306). The wife in the opening dialogue of Volume II takes a similar line. She sees the open saying of grace before meals as a sign of a lack of gentility. "'Tis perfectly ungenteel to do it publickly" (II. 19). Again, she tells her uncle, the minister, "we never say grace to Chocolate or Tea [...] 'tis not the fashion" (II. 26).

The first family of Volume I are fairly wealthy in any case. They live in a large house, which backs on to fields (I. 47). They own a coach and have servants to drive it (I. 96). Family

members have private rooms. The elder daughter refers to her “chamber” upstairs, within which she has a “closet” where she keeps her books and playtexts (I. 96-7). These in themselves were not cheap. Likewise, family members are well-dressed in clothes which are fashionable enough to be shown off at church or later in the park. All in all, though they are not of the “Quality”, or aristocracy, a high standard of living is implied. Similarly, the two merchant families into which Thomas and William are apprenticed are also well-to-do, even though Defoe refers to them as “the meaner Sort of People” (I. 161). Will is placed with “an industrious Trading Man” who lives in a Country Town [...] not far from London” (I. 161). This tradesman is a “Clothier” who took on “several Apprentices, and several Journey-men” (I. 161). Tom is with a “wealthy Shopkeeper, a Magistrate or Alderman of the Corporation, who had likewise a large Family of Children and Servants” (I. 162). Although not aristocratic, this man is a person of social standing, successful and rich, owning “warehouses” and several “work-houses” where his apprentices learn to carry out his trade (I. 162; 188).

The title page of Volume II, written about three years after Volume I, indicates that it first relates to “Family Breaches, and their obstructing Religious Duties” and secondly, “To the great Mistake of mixing the Passions, in the Managing and Correcting of Children WITH A great Variety of Cases relating to setting Ill Examples to children and Servants”. This suggests several pre-occupations which were present in Volume I. The opening dialogue presents two married couples, in Defoe’s words, “the Story of Two very bad Wives” (II. 3), who both experience the effect of differences towards religion. Interestingly, in his title Defoe puts the “Family Breaches” first, before their obstructive effects. The first part is concerned with marriage. Marital discord interferes with religion and is expressed as a conflict between secular and religious issues. The theme of the destructiveness of “Passion” is introduced at the start (II. 7). Defoe asserts his belief that “there can be no Family-

Worship, where there is no Family Love” (II. 11) and that such love resides first in the husband and wife, where “Vertuous Love is founded upon two Things only [...] *Merit* and *Suitability*” (II. 11). We are quickly among the contradictions of a former and more modern way of seeing human relationships. The “Friend” who tells his exemplary tale to the first “Citizen” and husband responds very like the first father of Part I when he is crossed, this time by a wife. He has decided to institute Family worship despite his wife’s objections and he, like “God”, will be “angry”, if his children will not attend (II. 44). Further, by implication, the husband’s will takes precedence over that of his wife in the religious upbringing of his children (II. 48).

Whereas in Volume I it was the elder young man and woman who challenged the father’s authority in introducing daily worship into the family, in Volume II the dispute is between husbands and wives. The theme of this volume is also slightly different. “Passion” is pitted against “reason” in a number of ways, the destructive power of “Passion” spelt out on the first page (II. 7). Family worship is allied with reason, its absence resulting in “Disorder” among children and servants (II. 9). Of the first married couple Defoe says, “Their Communication was poison’d by the Breach in their Affection [with] Passion prevailing” (II. 11). There are two points of interest here. First, by putting the relationship between the couple before the breakdown of “order”, Defoe suggests that love-matches have primacy. Secondly, it is the wives who take refuge in a former, more authoritarian relationship, not the husbands. In the opening dialogue the “Citizen”, or husband, of this couple is confronted by his “friend”, a “Country Gentleman”, who recounts his own, different, behaviour, as an example of how to handle a similar situation (II. 17; 40). The friend has followed his duty, despite his wife’s opposition, and introduced family worship. His wife says, “I know I am your upper Servant, but I am not such a Servant but I may have Liberty to laugh at my Master when I think proper” (II. 38), and again, “you must exercise your Authority to stop my Mouth

[...] you shall be obey'd" (II. 38). In the end, the husband/friend decides to carry out his "Duty" regardless, saying, "I will not purchase your Favour at the Price of disobeying my Maker" (II. 38-9). The citizen decides to do the same, first trying to make peace with his wife. After this discussion, in which she accuses him of "hypocritical Formalities" (II. 42), the husband takes refuge in his "authority", much like the first father in Volume I, saying of his children, "I shall expect their Attendance, and will take care to make them comply with it, whether they like it or not" (II. 42). This is a more complex story than the one in Volume I, though again, the instigation of religious practice is the cause of family disruption. The elder daughter "about 17 Years old" assures him that she has nothing against family prayer, nor has ever expressed a rejection of it, which his wife had reported to him. Her younger sister takes a similar line. This creates another difference between husband and wife. When confronted, the wife calls her daughters "Lyars" (II. 48). The dispute between husband and wife continues, Defoe re-iterating his central argument, that "where the religious Peace is broken, no other Peace can long continue" (II. 51). He also refers repeatedly to the wife's "Passion" (II. 50; 51). His reading of marriage is to the point. Reporting the husband's guilt at locking his wife out of the room at prayer time, he reminds us that the man was "a very kind and tender Husband to her" (II. 51) and that given their disagreements about family worship, "there was very little room, if any, for the poor Remains of conjugal Affection to shew itself" (II. 51). He also makes clear that we are to see the wife as a "sad *Memento* against spiritual or religious Pride, and to be an Evidence of the exceeding Difficulty of restoring a Pharisaical Hypocrite to Repentance" (II. 51-2). Things deteriorate however. The wife falls ill with a "Distemper", seeming to lose her mind in what Defoe calls "a melancholy Lunacy", although she shows signs of religious conversion, if not the mending of her marriage (II. 53-4). The husband too, catches smallpox and only narrowly survives. The citizen/husband discusses his wife's spiritual state with his returning "Friend" and they agree that they are unable to

ascertain whether or not she has undergone any “penitence” for her former sins, so must leave the matter in God’s hands (II. 56). Defoe now recounts the remainder of the friend’s story. His wife runs away to her brother, Sir Richard’s. Then whilst he is obliged to be away in London, the friend hears that his wife and Sir Richard have quarrelled and that she has run away from Sir Richard’s (II. 66-7). In a brilliant stroke of irony, given his initial advice to the Citizen, the Friend/husband dashes off to find her. “I must go Home as fast as I can, tho’ I leave my Business undone, and come again; for I have no Patience to think of my Wife being left to wander I don’t know where, now she has quarrel’d with her Brother” (II. 69). The citizen calls him “the best Husband in *England*” (II. 69). The Friend is clear about his own relationship with her. “[Sir Richard] is her Brother, but I am her Husband; he is a Relation to her, but I am a Part of her; he is of her Family, but I am her self” (II. 69). The second dialogue ends on this dramatic note.

We go straight into the third dialogue, which lasts about fifty pages. This dialogue moves back in time, recording, to begin with, a discussion between the Friend’s wife and Sir Richard’s lady’s maid, who had gone to the Friend’s house to get the wife’s clothing. At this point, the Friend/husband is in London on business and his wife has not yet fallen out with her brother, Sir Richard. The wife is anxious to find out what passed between the maid, Susan, and her husband. Susan takes the initiative, deciding to deny that the husband has shown any interest in his wife’s welfare by asking after her. Susan tells Sir Richard that she has done this “as the only way to bring [the wife] to herself; ’tis great Pity she should use an honest Gentleman so, all the House cries shame on it” (II. 71). Sir Richard approves, not surprisingly.

There follows a lengthy discussion between Sir Richard and his sister, whilst she is still living with him. A number of themes come together here. The figure of Sir Richard is obviously significant. Emphasis is placed on the central importance of religion through Sir Richard’s

gradual “conversion” – his change of heart and the reform of his life. He is moved by the example of his sister’s “wickedness” and distressed at her quotation from the Old Testament that “*The Prayer of the Wicked is an Abomination*” (II. 88).<sup>54</sup> His gradual awakening to God is traced on pages 90 and 109. Force is given to his testimony through the emphasis on his social position. He is, we presume, a magistrate, since his attendance at the “Quarter-Session” is mentioned (II. 74). The connection between gentility and religious priorities is made specific through Sir Richard’s comments on “the strange kind of Pride [which makes some people] think Religion below their Quality” (II. 118). The Friend remarks that his wife had told him something similar, but that he “minded none of those things” (II. 118). Ultimately Sir Richard rejects his former “Company [with Sir *Harry C*—and Col. *Bra*— ] [his] hunting [and his] Club; [...] the Wit, the Gayety, and the Revelling” he once enjoyed, with no regrets (II. 118).

Linking with the religious theme is the “She-friend” with whom the friend’s wife/Sir Richard’s sister goes to stay on leaving her brother’s. Through this woman Defoe openly attacks the “Latitude of ill Words” which he says is a “Custom grown up of late to such a height, that it is become the Vice of our Conversation [and it is] fashionable too” (II. 95). The woman is an exemplar of the worldliness with which the Godly life is in conflict. The detrimental nature of “passion” is also emphasised through Sir Richard’s abuse of his sister (II. 63–4). Despite his anxiety at the disappearance of his wife from her brother’s, the Friend’s sense of priorities is stressed – he says he will give up anything to get his wife back *except* family worship (II. 108). The theme of the faithful servant is illustrated through Susan especially, and Betty, the “Companion’s” maid. Neither will deliver the message to the husband that his wife refuses to talk to him. Susan finally takes her mistress home herself and puts her to bed (II. 106; 100). A discussion between Sir Richard and his brother-in-law, this

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<sup>54</sup> Furbank’s note 43 (II. 279) reads “a misquotation from Proverbs 15: 8: The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight”.

same Friend of dialogues I and II, takes the reader to the end of Part I. Their dialogue turns on the Grace of God and the operation of the “Spirit” in Sir Richard, the Friend encouraging him to believe in his conversion (II. 110-120). The Part ends with a brief paragraph describing the reformed Sir Richard’s family (II. 120). His son lives on to be “a sober, well enclin’d Gentleman” (II. 120).

Defoe’s end-note (one for the three dialogues of Part I, as opposed to one at the end of every chapter), re-iterates that family “Breaches”, often arising from the augmentation of trivial beginnings, are “destructive [of] *Family-Worship*, and [...] ruinous in the Example to children, Servants, and all that are in any way acquainted with, or concern’d in the Family” (II. 121). Whilst Defoe’s understanding of human relationships is unerring – often trivial spats escalate in to full-blown rows, since apparently small disagreements often point to deeper differences – the reader is a little confused here. Earlier Defoe put it the other way round and we are forced to ask ourselves, do such “breaches” cause a failure of religion, or does the lack of religious practice cause marital differences? He repeats his central message: it is the duty of husbands to set up family worship despite any opposition from their wives. They must take responsibility for this “Duty”. A final injunction is given to both wives and husbands “studiously to avoid sudden Cavils and Disputes between themselves about Trifles” which lead to “Passions” with unintended consequences (II. 122). Defoe here unites and concludes his three central themes, marital discord, the importance of establishing family worship, and the destructive nature of the passions.

Apart from the disputes which characterise Dialogue I, in Volume II Defoe is less concerned with the clash between ancient and modern family structures. The volume is more of a piece than the first and overall less anguished in tone, although the fathers here portrayed are

verging on the insane. The exploration of the effect of “Passion” returns as a central theme. The narrative of the first Dialogue concerns a father who is a worldly success. He has become rich through “Trade”, through a combination of his own application and “God’s Blessing” (II. 123). Defoe stresses his “Passion” however and his own awareness of it and regret for his actions once it dies down. Defoe sets out to show the error of this man’s “almost Tyrannical Family Government” and its effect on his children, whom he otherwise “lov’d” (II. 124).

Defoe’s assumptions about the family surface in his preamble to the first dialogue of Part II, where he begins to address the nature of motherhood. He claims to believe that there exists in a Mother “Affections and Tenderness” unequalled by any substitute (here the dependant relation looking after the children following their mother’s death). Such care is “form’d upon no other Foundation than that of Nature, and natural Duty” (II. 125). Of fathers, he argues that children’s affection is more effective in governing them than “Passion or Authority alone” (II. 125). This father’s “Severity [...] wore out what we call Affection on both sides; especially that endearing Part which alone unites the Souls of Parents and Children, and which so much assists in the Instructing of Children, as to give a far greater Force to the Words of a dear and tender Parent, to a loving, dutiful and affectionate Child, than can be possible in the Blows and Stripes of a Father governing by his Authority Purely” (II. 125). The father/child relationship is better when based on affection, rather than on authority alone. Defoe is thus committed to the more modern form of family. “Authority” is here linked with “Passion”, which only arouses fear in the children (II. 126). Defoe repeats this message in various ways in this preamble to the narrative. “As [the father] made his Passion the Medium of his Government, so their Fear was the Medium of their Obedience” (II. 126). In a similar device to that used in the opening dialogues, the “neighbour” warns the father that “Passion is but a kind of Short Madness, and has no relation to the Duty of correcting our Children; tis a

Frenzy” (II. 129). Again, “Passion destroys the very Nature of Correction” (II. 131). The first two dialogues develop this idea. Defoe shows himself aware of the clash between authority and affection. But is there really a clash? R.A Houlbrooke, basing his comments on a study of contemporary diaries, argues that authority and affection are “by no means incompatible”.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, fathers have a “Patriarchal or Paternal Exercise of legal Authority”, over their children, which the neighbour distinguishes from “a tyrannical Usurpation” (II. 134). The neighbour gives various examples of the difference between the breaking of the will and the proper upbringing of the child, for instance in the case of the behaviour of the owner of a horse, or of a slave (II. 130; 135); “the Nature of Correction, as it respects a Father to a Child, or a Christian Master to a Servant, is quite different; Passion can bear no share in it” (II. 135). The father repeatedly asserts that what the neighbour is urging is impossible, and ultimately, against “human nature” (II. 136); but rather than a discussion of what such a concept means, the neighbour offers more biblical examples in support of his case. The neighbour at last proposes a new idea, namely that a pause to control his emotions might give the child the opportunity for “a just vindication” (II. 136).

The father finally accepts the neighbour’s argument, admitting that he has treated his children brutally and with little advantage in that their behaviour to him has not improved (II. 137). He also responds to the idea that he may have treated them unjustly, inflicting “a Punishment without a Crime” (II. 141). There follows a passage in which the neighbour berates the surrogate mother for intensifying the father’s anger at his son, rather than acting as a “Mediator”, which she would have done had she been the children’s real mother, he argues. “She is a Firebrand in your Family” he says (II. 139). One further exchange between neighbour and father reveals Defoe’s belief that children and parents can be *too* familiar. He

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<sup>55</sup> R.A. Houlbrooke, ed. *English Family Life 1576-1716: An Anthology from Diaries* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 10.

says, “it requires a great deal of Prudence to treat our Children with a decent Familiarity, and yet preserve the Majesty and Authority of a Parent; and much of the Prudence of this Part lies on the Children’s part in not assuming an indecent equality” (II. 141). The “Majesty and Authority” suggests a former, more patriarchal family type, “Majesty” linking father with king. To this point, Defoe seems to be arguing for the nuclear family, based on affectionate relationships; now he seems to want to retain some of the characteristics of a former social structure, in which fathers are revered like kings.

In the second dialogue the neighbour tells the father the story of Mr\_\_\_ . From their opening discussion it is clear that Defoe supports the idea that children and parents have a mutual “Duty” (II. 149). Mr.\_\_\_ is an example of a father even more extreme than the father/listener here. The latter recognises him as a “lunatick”, one who is “fierce, cruel and unnatural” to his two sons and his daughter, which illustrates the theme of avoiding the passions in bringing up children (II. 153). A further theme emerges, one common in moral literature of the time. The neighbour points out that, despite the bad behaviour of Mr.\_\_\_, his children still owe him a “Duty”: “Tho the Parent may fail of his Duty to his Child, yet that by no means dispenses with the Duty of a Child, because the Child’s Obedience is not founded upon the Father’s Conduct, but upon the Laws of Nature” (II. 156-7). The neighbour expounds this at some length, arguing that, “for this Reason I think this Person’s Son inexcusably to blame, whatever his Father’s Conduct was; and, at the same Time that we must condemn the Father’s ungovern’d Passion, every good Man must detest the Treatment of him by his Son” (II. 157). He later acknowledges that the Father is initially at fault: “’tis a sad Case, when our Children are led to break in upon their Duty to us, by our first being wanting in our Duty to them” (II. 159). Having treated his three older children with the utmost severity, Mr.\_\_\_ now goes to the other extreme. He resorts to “blinded Affection” in the treatment of one of his two

younger children, is disillusioned when they contrive to steal money from him to support their “Vices”, and swings to the other extreme of anger, causing one of his remaining sons, purportedly his favourite, to leave home (II. 168-9). The younger and less favoured son, meanwhile, has come to abhor the errors of his past and exemplifies the neighbour’s assertion that he must do his duty to his parent regardless. He owns more than once that he has been in the wrong. “I am sensible it was the wickedest Thing I could be able to do, let my Father’s Conduct be what it will” (II. 173). Again, “Let my Father be as passionate as he will, his Children should not fail in the least part of their Duty” (II. 174). The dialogue ends with a reconciliation, initially between the father and his daughter and younger son, then later with all his children, largely through the mediation of the “good Woman” servant living with the family. Her effectiveness leads the neighbour to promise another tale, this time about a faithful maidservant, the following day, thus introducing the third dialogue. Dialogue 2 contains a narrative within its main narrative, the neighbour breaking in with a contrasting tale of an indulgent father (II. 161-167). This “Acquaintance” is initially too close to his children, being “their Play-fellow and Companion”. He turns out to be a model father for the edification of the original father, however, by demonstrating two themes. First, his tale shows that both affection and “authority” can co-exist, though “Government and Authority” must be exercised if the “family” is to be well regulated (II. 165). Secondly, this father is able to “correct” his son without “passion” (II. 167).

Dialogue 3 introduces the small child of the irreligious family, who will be the subject of the fourth dialogue. He figures here because it is through his “poor Maid-servant” that Defoe develops the theme of the faithful servant (II. 189). The whole dialogue is that promised by the neighbour to the citizen at the end of Dialogue 2, and it concerns a Sea Captain, the worldly family, the faithful servant “Margy” and the exemplary small boy. Although at

fifteen pages this dialogue is relatively short, its complexity allows Defoe to weave together several key themes. The main focus to begin with is the lack of religion which characterises the family (II. 182-8). The discussion between the Captain, the mother and the smallest son, Jacky, brings together her lack of maternal feeling, despite what Defoe was arguing in the previous dialogue, the absence of family religion, and the boy's natural inclination towards godliness, despite the "Evil Examples of Parents and Instructors" which surround him (II. 189). There follows a discussion between the Captain and a "Cousin" staying with the Family, which introduces Margy, the servant who teaches Jacky the rudiments of Christianity and whom the Captain pays to carry on this work, though unbeknownst to the family (II. 193). Margy becomes a kind of surrogate mother, hated by the natural mother "because she teaches the Child good things" (II. 198). Through her religious belief and practice, Margy is thus an example of a good servant and of an exemplary mother.

In the fourth dialogue the neighbour continues this narrative. Jacky is given a slave boy, Toby, and they discuss the impact of Christianity on slaves. Although Defoe seems to have approved of the use of slaves in the development of the empire through its trading, he was clearly also interested in the debate about the religious implications of slavery.<sup>56</sup> As is evident from this dialogue, once converted to Christianity, the slave was recognised to possess an eternal soul, and was therefore owed his or her freedom. Jacky succeeds in converting Toby, who elects to stay with him as his servant, nonetheless, until Jacky, then an adult, "voluntarily gave him his Dismiss" (II. 208; 241).

Woven into this dialogue is a discussion between Jacky's parents which echoes that between the husbands and wives in Dialogue 1. The Father is a terrible drunkard but he begins to be

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<sup>56</sup> See for instance *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 39.

affected by Jacky's godliness, although initially he can only see his own shortcomings, and cannot change; "he was one that *confess'd all* and *reform'd none*" (II. 205). His wife jeers at him accordingly, "your religious Flashes comes so by Fits, that they are enough to give any one a Surfeit of such things" (II. 213). The father finally, through the "wonderful Effect of GOD's Grace in the Child", is able to change his ways and "effectually reform'd his Life, and from a common Swearer and Drunkard, became a grave, sober, and perfectly alter'd Man" (II. 214). To put himself out of the way of temptation the father leaves home and goes "into the Country", taking only Jacky and Toby with him (II. 216-7).

We now return to the narrative of Jacky and the conversion of Toby, which Defoe uses for doctrinal exposition. The theme of the innocent teaching their betters is articulated by the "Lady" at the Father's second lodgings. She says to the Father, "this Child [Jacky] has been your Instructor, rather than you his" (II. 224). This Lady reminds the repentant father that he has "Authority" to reform his family if he feels the example of his conversion is not enough (II. 226). Here, however the father does not implement it, soon dies and leaves Jacky and Toby with the Lady (II. 228).

To the end of Volume II two themes predominate: the need to curb the passions and that of the faithful servant. These are expressed as alternating dialogues. In the conversation between Jacky and the Lady Barbara, "passion" is allied with the mother's swearing (II. 230). After the death of his father Jacky becomes preoccupied with the "sins" of his mother, fearing on her behalf, that she has made God "angry" (II. 231-2). The child has a prophetic dream which becomes a reality (II. 234-5). His example brings about a death-bed conversion in his mother, however (II. 235-40). The religious theme culminates with the Minister's assertion of Jacky's

success as a “Minister of GOD” (II. 237). Jacky manages to convert one of his sisters, but not the whole family (II. 240).

Finally, the Neighbour/Friend and the Citizen of the opening dialogue continue the theme of the necessity of curbing the passions. Despite all the stories told by the Neighbour, the Citizen remains uncertain that he can conquer his “Passion”. This leads to a final exemplary tale from the Neighbour, designed, as he tells the Citizen, to make him “hate your own Excess, by shewing you one worse than yourself” (II. 257– 275; 260). This last family consists of a prudent mother and “generally [...] sober and well-inclin’d Children; but their Father’s passionate Temper was a sad Example to them” (II. 257). In this case the father’s rage is aroused by any setback in his business affairs and he vents his anger on the first person to come in his way at home. This father is a “Madman” indeed (II. 257). The man’s passion “destroy’d the very Face of Order and Religion in the Family” (II. 259). The nature of parenthood is again at issue, especially the role of the father: “What Instruction can any Parent give, that gives no Example? What Weight in any Reproof, when his own Practice would destroy the Authority of it, and take away the very Reason of that Reproof” (II. 262). This father’s passion “destroy’d all his sense of Duty” (II. 262). The wife is also an exemplar. The Neighbour asserts that her attempts to mitigate the impact of her husband’s fury are achieved because “she fully studied her Duty, and applied herself to perform it” (II. 264). A battle ensues when the father accuses his sons and his wife of removing his business from him. Finally, he cripples a “saucy” Porter, and spends the rest of his life regretting it (II. 275). The work ends when the first father is at last convinced of the need to curb his own passion (II. 275).

However, in the interim, the preamble to the fifth Dialogue returns the reader to the story of the Captain's last voyage to the East Indies, his wife's death and how he finds Margy, of whom they have lost track, she being no longer with Jacky's family (II. 241-4). The theme of the faithful servant is evident in Margy's reluctance to leave the Lady whose children she currently has the care of, at the request of the Captain (II. 245-6; 249). She emphasises her "Duty" (e.g. II. 250). Her current mistress stresses her value and later says, "she is a Pattern to all the Servants in the Nation" (II. 251- 2). Once the Cousin/Gentlewoman has obtained the Lady's consent to release Margy, Defoe intervenes and completes the narrative for us himself, having made his point, which, he says, was "to instruct Servants in what is their Duty, when little Children come into their Hands, that they are to do more than Dress and Undress them" (II. 255).

In considering Defoe's presentation of the family and its values in *The Family Instructor*, several conclusions seem to work against one another. Apparently seeing the breakdown of values he considers important, Defoe first looks back to a former model of the family, calling for a return to previous standards and ways of behaving, especially with regard to religious practice. Then he presents a desirable model of the family based on this perception. But what he in fact writes is in conflict with this, the families here presented often exemplifying the more modern model. Since Defoe's writing frequently straddles ancient and modern world views, this work could be said to be more than usually typical of Defoe.

On the one hand are Defoe's origins in "Dissent", with its literal reading of the Bible; on the other, his understanding of the value of "the individual". If one accepts "religion", as it is portrayed in *The Family Instructor*, one accepts, perhaps even wants, hierarchy, the *status quo*, a valuing of collective above individual rights. There is a problem, however, in that such

a world view, belonging to a former era, was being challenged. We can see, with the luxury of hindsight, that it was breaking down. For example, monarchy was no longer able to rule according to personal whim. Politics had exhibited the ascendancy of parliament, which began at least to give value to the opinions of the “people”, with the increasing acceptance of government with the consent of the governed.<sup>57</sup> In science empiricism became key, and, building on Bacon’s initiative, there was a growing reliance on evidence, on the need to demonstrate truths discovered, and thus the beginning of scientific method as we know it today. As these changes moved forward, a literal reading of the Bible, and with it the hierarchies it enshrined, including the traditional organisation of the family, became untenable, so that Defoe’s presentation of the family in this work is already anachronistic. Thus Defoe was signing up to previous family values and relationships

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<sup>57</sup> Parliamentary rule was established in 1688, when the crown was offered to William III (“of Orange”) and his wife, a daughter of James II, Mary. See also for example J. Swift, *Gulliver’s Travels*, ed. Paul Turner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 21-2. Swift mentions “the two Houses [which] make up the most August assembly in *Europe*, the House of Commons; who were all principle Gentlemen, *freely* picked and culled out by the People themselves [...] to whom, in conjunction with the Prince, the whole legislature is committed”. Defoe himself, in his pamphlet, *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People Explained and Asserted*, insists, on nearly every page, that Parliament, the supreme power, consists of King, Lords and Commons. (Daniel Defoe, *The Original Power of the Collective Body of the People Explained and Asserted* (London, 1769)). On p. 18 he states, “When I am speaking of the Right of the People, I would be understood of the Freeholders”. He believed firmly that England “belonged” to the Freeholders.

## Chapter 3

### Religion

Any study of the contexts of *The Family Instructor*<sup>1</sup> must consider contemporary religious discourse. This chapter therefore explores the nature of religion in the period and the way it is articulated in *The Family Instructor*, to argue that despite Defoe's claim to portray both Dissenting and Anglican forms of Protestantism in this work, overall his viewpoint is that of a Dissenter. Although *The Family Instructor* reflects contemporary religious thought, resembling for instance sermons by "Latitudinarian" divines, it would be wrong to designate Defoe as representing any of the many sects of his day. As far as we know, he grew up in a Dissenting household, and this accounts for his general approach to religious matters. This chapter therefore begins by defining some of the key religious terms which are particularly significant in *The Family Instructor*, before going on to examine Defoe's claim that the work is equally applicable to Anglicans and Dissenters. While it retains a number of features which might be described as Puritan, Defoe's viewpoint remains that of a Dissenter, and this can be demonstrated by examining key ideas such as duty, reason, nature and Providence. Defoe's attitude to nature in particular is evidence of *The Family Instructor's* transitional position, its emphasis on emotion foreshadowing the sentimentalism of works written in the late eighteenth century. For these reasons, it is important, at the outset, to explain a number of terms. A range of doctrines is comprised within the term Protestantism. Although, as we see, Defoe was not particularly concerned with doctrinal issues and is most often associated with

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor*, Volume I (1715) and Volume II (1718); Daniel Defoe, *Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, gen eds, W.R. Owens and P.N. Furbank, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), I and II ed. P.N. Furbank. All references are to this latter edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

Dissent, it is important not to use terms describing religious positions loosely or to consider them as interchangeable. They were not, and their differences mattered to those using them to define their beliefs at the time.

The most extreme form of English Protestantism was originally Puritanism. This had its origins in the Elizabethan period and Christopher Hill concludes that “in the seventeenth century the word was normally used, in its religious sense, to indicate those who wanted reform from within the church, as contrasted with separatists on the one hand, and those who were satisfied with the established discipline on the other”.<sup>2</sup> Citing William Bradshaw’s *English Puritanism* (1615) Hill goes on to argue that, “when contemporaries came to define Puritanism in religious terms, Sabbatarianism, opposition to popery and hostility to oaths were often mentioned”.<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, two of these characteristics feature in *The Family Instructor*. Hill also asserts that “Puritan” was a “general term of abuse” and Shakespeare’s portrayal of Malvolio as essentially a killjoy seems to corroborate this enduring perception of the Puritans in the public mind.<sup>4</sup>

However, 'Puritanism' is a very unstable term. According to Ann Hughes, "there has been much debate about the nature, or even the existence of something called 'Puritanism'. For some commentators Puritanism has disappeared into a broader protestant consensus, united by Calvinist theology [...] For others, however, Puritans are a small band of unpopular zealots whose political role and religious influence is negative until the breakdown of 1639-

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Random House, 2003), pp. 2, 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>4</sup> William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, eds Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), Act III, Scene 4, pp. 53–7.

40".<sup>5</sup> She observes that, " Puritans were not an alienated opposition, but simply the more enthusiastic wing, the 'hotter sort' of Protestants." But Ann Hughes is writing of the run-up to the English Civil War. We should look to other historians for a definition. For Barry Coward, writing of a later period of history, "Dissent can be as misleading as 'Puritanism' in that it encompasses individuals and groups of many varied beliefs."<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Julian Hoppit affirms that, "In 1695 the heats among the Dissenters grew perfectly scandalous"<sup>7</sup>. Tim Harris uses the terms 'Puritan', 'Nonconformist' and 'Dissenter' interchangeably.<sup>8</sup> Christopher Hill has difficulty with the concept of 'Puritanism', claiming not to accept "the legend of Puritans as black-clothed bigots, who went about whining psalms through their noses, desecrating churches, and killing joy". He reminds us of "John Milton, lover of poetry and music, of Oliver Cromwell, lover of music and wine". Undoubtedly, "They were the defeated radicals of 1640-60" but nonetheless "the radicals' inheritance is worth searching for."<sup>9</sup> Under Cromwell the Puritans, like many other religious minorities, enjoyed toleration.<sup>10</sup> Also under Cromwell, Puritanism failed as a system of church government.<sup>11</sup>

Calvinism is of particular importance to an understanding of Puritanism and its effects are evident in *The Family Instructor* and other contemporary works. Calvinism was a theological system based on the thought of the French reformer, Jean Calvin (1509-1564). Emphasising

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<sup>5</sup> Ann Hughes, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1991), p. 63. Ibid., p. 97

<sup>6</sup> Coward, *Stuart Age*, p. 465.

<sup>7</sup> Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England: 1689-1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 219.

<sup>8</sup> Tim Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society: 1660-1715* (Harlow: Longman, 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Hill, *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), pp. 53, 90.

<sup>10</sup> This was so, unless such minorities were perceived as a threat to society, through, for instance, advocating common ownership of property, as did the Anabaptists and Diggers. Communities founded on such principles were ruthlessly exterminated.

<sup>11</sup> There is a useful list of sects, with brief definitions, in John Bunyan and others, *Grace Abounding with Other Spiritual Autobiographies*, eds John Stachniewski, with Anita Pacheco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 225-8.

the authority of Scripture as expressed in the Bible, its view of human nature is gloomy. Arguing that all human action, even that taken by Christians, is intrinsically evil as a result of “the Fall, it stresses the “bondage of human free will through sin”. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* spells this out. “The characteristic Calvinist emphasis upon the divine omnipotence is expressed in the notion of divine election and predestination, according to which God predestined some of His creatures to eternal life and others to damnation without reference to foreseen merit”. The *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* suggests that although this doctrine acquired greater centrality after Calvin’s death, overall Calvinism’s “greatest impact was upon Puritanism”.<sup>12</sup> Ideas of “election” and predestination, which deny the possibility that human action can influence the after-life in relation to whether one is saved or damned, are significant for *The Family Instructor*. Many examples of this way of thinking are to be found in literature, especially in the type of self-scrutiny known as “spiritual autobiography”. Puritans were encouraged by their pastors to keep a daily record or diary itemising God’s goodness to them. Its purpose was self-reflective, but it was also aimed at proving to the writer that he or she was one of God’s “Elect”. In his introduction to John Bunyan’s *Grace Abounding*, John Stachniewski suggests that such theology “turned the Bible itself into the ultimate book of signs. [...] Bible verses [...] were woven into the fabric of consciousness, helping to construct identity. Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* is presented similarly as a book of signs in which intimate and anxious engagement, self-identification, is encouraged. [...] *Grace Abounding* relives the experimental religion of an individual who wishes to regard the testimony he gives, and the very act of scrupulous self-reading, as constituting the evidence, the signs, of his election”.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, p. 268.

<sup>13</sup> *Grace Abounding*, pp. xii-xiii.

The group of Protestants entitled “Dissenters” is examined in some detail in what follows, because Defoe is considered to belong to it and he published writings relating to Dissent and the Dissenters throughout his life. There were no Dissenters before the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, for the simple reason that they came into being as a result of the Act of Uniformity of 1662, from whose provisions they dissented. It is important not to oversimplify, however. Scholars illustrate the existence of “Nonconformity” before 1662.<sup>14</sup> For reasons which are still a matter of dispute, through his chief minister, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Charles II passed a series of laws requiring his subjects to take an oath of allegiance to him and also, significantly, to accept the Book of Common Prayer as revised in 1661 and “authorised” by the Act of Uniformity of 1662.<sup>15</sup> The penalties for Dissent were severe. The children of Dissenters were barred from attendance at university; Dissenters were unable to hold any public office, could not join any of the forces, and were not allowed to meet in groups of more than five for worship unless using the approved Book of Common Prayer. Many practising Anglican clergy found themselves unable to accept this. As a result of the 1662 Act some 1800 were “ejected” from the churches in which previously they had officiated, to become Nonconformist Protestants, known henceforth as “Dissenters”.<sup>16</sup> Sutherland asserts,

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<sup>14</sup> For instance, Isabel Rivers quotes from Richard Baxter’s posthumously published autobiography to argue that, although the 1662 Act referred only to clergy, the “Clarendon” Acts together had the effect of uniting a number of nonconforming sects who had very different doctrinal positions. Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660 – 1780*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), I pp. 91-101. See also, N.H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-century England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1987); John Spurr, *The Post Reformation: Religion, Politics, and Society in Britain 1603-1714* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), p. 209.

<sup>15</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, pp. 384-5; Kenyon argues that Charles was motivated by financial need. He blames Clarendon for the acts passed against the Dissenters, claiming he “deliberately reduced Charles II to the same position *vis-à-vis* parliament as his father” and therefore both king and first minister were unable “to prevent the introduction of a church settlement contrary to the king’s wishes and probably [Clarendon’s] own”. J.P. Kenyon, *The Stuarts*, rev edn (London: Severn House, 1977), p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> Paula Bakscheider describes the effects of this on Samuel Annesley, the Defoe family’s pastor and on Daniel. This was no small event. Bakscheider claims that “some 15,000 families were ruined, 5,000 died in prison [...] and as many as 60,000 may have suffered for dissent”. Bakscheider, pp. 7-11; John Forster, friend and biographer of Charles Dickens, was still affected by the Clarendon laws nearly two hundred years later. He left Cambridge partly because, as a Unitarian, he could not get a degree. “Only those who subscribed to the 39 Articles of the Church of England could graduate” (Claire Tomalin, *Charles Dickens: A Life* (London: Viking Penguin, 2011), pp. 81, 431; Rivers explains that Unitarians were descendants of eighteenth-century

however, that, “All through the reigns of Charles and his brother James the Dissenters were used as so much political ballast to trim the ship of state in a crisis”.<sup>17</sup>

Although the actual number of Dissenters was small – they constituted no more than five or six per cent of the population as a whole – Dissent was clearly a major issue from 1660 and the original Acts of Uniformity of 1662, right through to the accession of George 1 in 1714.<sup>18</sup> There was a brief respite for Dissenters when William III (“of Orange”) passed his Act of Toleration in 1689, his Calvinism combined with political insight prompting a brief period when Dissenters were allowed to build their own places of worship, Meeting Houses, and were free to worship in their own way. The Test Act of 1672 remained in force, however, so that Dissenters were still unable to play any part in public life, despite William’s expressed wish for the “admission [to public office] of *all* Protestants that are willing and able to serve”.<sup>19</sup> This led to the development of the practice of “occasional conformity”, which meant that provided a Dissenter took Holy Communion in the Church of England once a year, his failure to comply with the Acts could be overlooked and he could take part in public life as before, which was to his own benefit and to that of the state. The practice was widespread. Nevertheless, the controversy was brought to a head by Sir Humphrey Edwin, who, on becoming Lord Mayor in 1697, “took communion in St. Paul’s and on the same Sunday attended a Dissenting communion service at Pinner’s Hall”.<sup>20</sup>

It was at this point that Defoe entered the lists with one of his earliest publications, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters, in Cases of Preferment, with a*

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Latitudinarians and that they “denied the divinity of Christ and stressed his moral, exemplary function, and in general attached great importance to reason and toleration in religious matters.” (Rivers, I. 48).

<sup>17</sup> James Sutherland, *Defoe* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1937), p. 77.

<sup>18</sup> I owe information regarding the number of Dissenters to an email communication with Professor J.A. Downie.

<sup>19</sup> Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England: 1689 – 1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 32.

<sup>20</sup> P. N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *A Political Biography of Daniel Defoe* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), p. 12.

*Preface to the Lord Mayor, Occasioned by his carrying the Sword to a Conventicle.*<sup>21</sup> What is significant however is not which side of the argument he favoured, but that for him it was a matter of logic. Early in his tract he says, “Nothing can be lawful and unlawful at the same time”. He keeps returning to this theme throughout. He deals in turn with each of the arguments given by those favouring the act. Those describing the annual taking of communion in the Church of England as a “civil matter” are “*playing bo-peep with God* [...] for the sacrament cannot be a sacrament in one place and not in another”. He again exclaims against the worldly priorities given by those in favour of occasional conformity, “the gay Prospect of a Great Place, [should not] tempt any Person beyond the Power that God’s Grace is pleas’d to Assist him with”. Such persons cannot be blameless; they have “made the Sacred Institution of Christ Jesus, become Pimps to their Secular Interest”. It is also, he argues, “an intolerable affront to the Church of *England*”. Defoe closes by re-stating the arguments in order to emphasise them.

Dissenters also included Independents (who became synonymous with Congregationalists in the 1690s), and Quakers, members of The Society of Friends. These latter, of all the Nonconforming sects, retained some of the original zeal of the early Puritans and were the least open to compromise. Aside from their religious beliefs, they were seen as a social threat because they presented a civil challenge. Similarly, Anabaptists, another Nonconforming group, were perceived to be a social as much as a religious threat, because of their belief in shared property ownership. By the time Defoe was writing they had become widely abused and associated with civil unrest, and therefore, being at the extreme end of the nonconforming sects, of little interest to Defoe. Whereas Baptists, Anabaptists and

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An Enquiry into the Occasional Conformity of Dissenters*, (London, 1697 [for 1698]), pp. 13, 17, 24-8.

Independents are thus insignificant in Defoe's work, his portrayal of Quakers is often sympathetic and these Dissenters are occasionally mentioned in *The Family Instructor*.<sup>22</sup>

One result of William's III's "toleration" was the build-up of animosity towards the Dissenting community. Julian Hoppit notes the connection between Dissent and the previous, commonwealth, era. He says that Dissenters were "stigmatised as progenitors of faction and disorder [and that as a result] many in the Church feared the Dissenters". They were seen as "political radicals".<sup>23</sup> Paula Backscheider makes the same point. The Reverend Henry Sacheverell's sermon of 1702 attacked the Dissenters, saying, among other things, that "Presbytery and Republicanism go hand in hand, they are but the Same Disorderly, *Levelling Principle*". Backscheider suggests that this and other such pamphlets "characterized the Dissenters as dangerous enemies".<sup>24</sup>

James Sutherland argues that "the hatred of the Dissenters in England had its roots in the English character", seeing this branch of Protestantism in terms of "Englishness" (the average Englishman not liking to draw attention to his religion) and class. Sutherland asserts that,

the rabid Dissenter, joyless, serious, prone to self-examination, living in one long spiritual crisis, was to the easy-going Tory squire of Defoe's day a dangerous fanatic, and to the easy-going Whig gentleman a person of unnecessary zeal [...] the gentleman supported, or at any rate countenanced, the Church of England; it was the lower middle classes, he felt, who whined and canted and grew fanatical over their religion [...] to go to a meeting house or a chapel came to be regarded as a sign of social inferiority [...]. The contemporary distaste for Dissenters is well seen in Swift,

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<sup>22</sup> Quakers appear in various of Defoe's works, notably in *Roxana*, where the protagonist takes refuge with a Quaker woman, and in the figure of William in *Captain Singleton*. Defoe was a friend of the younger William Penn, himself a convert to Quakerism and eventual founder of the state of Pennsylvania, in the United States of America.

<sup>23</sup> Hoppit, p. 218.

<sup>24</sup> Henry Sacheverell, *The Political Union: A Discourse Shewing the Dependance [sic] of Government on Religion in General: and of the English Monarchy on the Church of England in Particular* (London, 1702); Backscheider, pp. 50, 91.

whose *Tale of a Tub* and *Discourse concerning the Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* admirably express the attitude of the average churchman of the day.<sup>25</sup>

Michael Watts makes a similar point. He suggests that, “Dissenter’ and ‘Non-Conformist’ are [...] negative terms, emphasising deviation from the accepted norm and carrying with them implications of inferiority and second-class citizenship”.<sup>26</sup> Given Defoe’s identification with this group of Nonconformists, he saw himself, not surprisingly, as a member of a “persecuted minority”.<sup>27</sup>

The controversy over occasional conformity continued. When William III died, High Church Tories gained the ascendancy. Encouraged by Queen Anne’s first speech to Parliament, in which she openly supported the Church of England, an act of parliament to make occasional conformity illegal was introduced into the Commons in 1702.<sup>28</sup> Defoe responded not only with *An Enquiry into Occasional Conformity, shewing that the Dissenters are in no Way Concern’d in it*, but also with the fateful *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, whose irony was unperceived at first, leading to his trial, imprisonment in Newgate and his time in the pillory.<sup>29</sup> Hostility to the practice of occasional conformity rumbled on. There were further attempts at banning it. Another act making it illegal in 1704 was defeated, but it was finally outlawed in 1711.<sup>30</sup> Despite his evident disapproval of the practice, Defoe continued to write powerfully against the bill in his editions of *The Review* for 20, 22 and 25 December, 1711,

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<sup>25</sup> Sutherland, pp. 81-02.

<sup>26</sup> Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters: 3 vols, I, From the Reformation to the French Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), II, *The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), III *The Crisis and Conscience of Nonconformity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2015), I, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Backscheider, p. 7. Here, Backscheider speaks for several other biographers.

<sup>28</sup> When Queen Anne dissolved Parliament on coming to the throne in 1702 she confirmed that, “My own Principles must always keep me entirely firm in the Interests and Religion of the Church of *England*, and it will incline me to countenance those who have the truest Zeal to support it.” Cited by Backscheider, p. 90.

<sup>29</sup> As a consequence of this, he became an employee of Robert Harley, who helped to secure his release; Daniel Defoe, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (London, 1702).

<sup>30</sup> Owens and Furbank, *Political Biography*, pp. 40-4, 123, 141.

arguing essentially that legislation removed the rights of the individual.<sup>31</sup> Many works were written about the controversy at the time, not least by Defoe himself. His first extant published work was *A Letter to a Dissenter from his Friend at the Hague*. Despite his background, his relationship with Dissenters was always difficult. What emerges from his writings is his clear-sightedness and grasp of political realities, as much as his religious convictions.

Those dissenting from the Church of England, as enshrined in the Thirty-Nine Articles of the revised Book of Common Prayer, included Presbyterians. The author of *An Attempt towards a coalition of English Protestants* identifies Dissenters as “sects” of Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists or Quakers “[who] can’t agree among themselves [and are] continually falling out”.<sup>32</sup> According to a table taken from Michael Watts’s work and published in the 2000 edition of *The New Oxford History of England*, Presbyterians were the most numerous among the groups of Dissenters and regarded themselves as moderates.<sup>33</sup> Presbyterians were a Protestant sect believing in a kind of church organisation governed by Elders, who are elected by the church congregation.<sup>34</sup> Further, these Elders are “ecclesiastically of equal rank”. Thus, up to a point, Presbyterians accepted a hierarchical organisation of the church, although not that of the Church of England, which is governed by bishops under an archbishop. Crucially, Church of England bishops are appointed by the monarch, rather than being elected by worshippers.<sup>35</sup> In his work, Michael Watts uses the terms Presbyterian and Dissenter interchangeably, as does Craig Rose.<sup>36</sup> As noted above,

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>32</sup> Author unknown, *An Attempt towards a Coalition of English Protestant* [etc] (London, 1715), p. 33. See also, note 2, page 131.

<sup>33</sup> Watts, p. 270; Hoppit, p. 220.

<sup>34</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, Presbyterianism, sig. b).

<sup>35</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, pp. 1322-3.

<sup>36</sup> Watts; Craig Rose, *England in the 1690s: Revolution, Religion and War* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

Presbyterians were the largest number of Nonconforming groups and generally regarded themselves as moderates. They held Church of England livings and were the clergy who were “ejected” as a result of the 1662 law requiring conformity to the Book of Common Prayer as revised for Charles II. Based on his family’s membership of Samuel Annesley’s congregation, Defoe is considered to belong to this religious group.

Church of England Bishops designated “Latitudinarians” are a complicating factor in any attempt to define Dissenters and Anglicans, since many of their views would have been accepted by Dissenters. Again, though small in number, Latitudinarians had a powerful impact and their influence is discernible in *The Family Instructor*. Isabel Rivers points out that the term was first used pejoratively in the 1650s and early 1660s,

to describe an influential group of men who, in terms of doctrine want to reduce Christian religion to a few plain essentially moral fundamentals, easily to be apprehended and put in practice by the ordinary, rational man, and in terms of discipline were prepared to accommodate themselves to the Church government of the day. [They were keen to stress that] latitude was a reaction against both Calvinist doctrine and the restrictions of the Church of England in the Cromwellian period by those who [...] were nevertheless willing to work within the Cromwellian establishment.<sup>37</sup>

While the first generation of Latitudinarians was based in Cambridge and clearly influenced by the so-called “Cambridge Platonists”, the next generation was London-based and included Simon Patrick (1626-1707), John Tillotson (1630-94) and Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715).<sup>38</sup>

Despite the fact that Defoe’s basic view of mankind accords with the Puritan view of man’s essentially evil nature, much of Rivers’s description of the Latitudinarian view of morality suggests *The Family Instructor*. Her summary is as follows:

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<sup>37</sup> Rivers, I, pp. 25-6, 27, 66.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 33.

Man is by nature sociable and disposed to act well; sin is an unnatural deviation from this disposition; [...] happiness is achieved through holiness, and understood properly is the same thing; the religious life is the most advantageous because religion enables man to act according to his free nature and in his own best interest by choosing the path that will make him holy and therefore happy.[...] The religious man is holy and happy, prudent and wise, and rewarded here as well as hereafter.<sup>39</sup>

*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* agrees that the views of Latitudinarians “did much to prepare the way for the religious temper of England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century”. It also agrees that “they attached relatively little importance to matters of dogmatic truth, ecclesiastical organisation, and liturgical practice”.<sup>40</sup> What is of interest here, is the resemblance between *The Family Instructor* and John Tillotson’s sermons fifty to fifty-four, the first preached at St .Lawrence Jewry on 13 June, 1684, when we understand Defoe was in London.<sup>41</sup>

Anglicanism, or the Protestantism of the Church of England, is critical to *The Family Instructor*, its adherents worshipping in churches as opposed to meeting houses. Defoe contends that this work is intended for both Anglicans and Nonconformists. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* states that “the original formulation of Anglican principles is to be sought in the reign of Elizabeth I [...] for it was under her that a *via media* between the opposing factions of Rome and Geneva (later called the ‘Elizabethan Settlement’) became a political necessity and Anglicanism as a doctrinal system took shape”.<sup>42</sup> Anglicanism attested that “Truth was [...] to be sought from the joint testimony of Scripture and ecclesiastical authority [...] the role of reason has always been affirmed in the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>40</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, p. 956.

<sup>41</sup> Evidence that Defoe was in London can be seen from the entry authorising his marriage in the register of the parish of St. Botolph, Aldgate (England; Canterbury—Marriage Licences Issued By The Archbishop of Canterbury, 1679-1694).

<sup>42</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, p. 65.

Anglican tradition; it is reason itself that recognises the authority of Scripture”.<sup>43</sup> This was the type of Protestantism which Charles II advocated as the “Church of England” from 1660. A key feature at this later period was the re-instatement of bishops (removed from office during Cromwell’s rule), which entailed the restoration of the church hierarchy.

If, as argued here, reason was a key principle of Anglicanism, reason is a central tenet of Defoe’s *The Family Instructor*. He spends much time, in Volume II especially, illustrating the detrimental effects of irrationality. Whilst this suggests again that the work should appeal to Anglicans and Dissenters, further, it raises the issue of Deism, which also had its origins in the latter part of the seventeenth century. John Spurr, discussing the “intellectual ferment” of the 1690s, notes that ideas from a range of sources “did all share a tendency to make reason the benchmark of religion. In this they represented a challenge to revealed religion and foreshadowed Enlightenment thought”.<sup>44</sup> Defoe was clearly aware of this challenge, though he tends to follow the religious convention of his Puritan heritage in the work in question by stressing the importance of “revelation”.

Catholicism, or “Popery”, is particularly significant since it was the focus of much political activity at the time and aroused widespread fear within the populace. From a twenty-first century perspective, the response to Catholicism in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century seems hysterical and out of all proportion to the actual numbers of Catholics in the population. Catholics in fact constituted about one per cent and certainly not more than five per cent of the English people, but the public perception of their danger to the state was

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>44</sup> Spurr, *Post Reformation*, p. 207.

powerful.<sup>45</sup> Until the Reformation set in motion by Martin Luther in about 1517 and Henry VIII's break with Rome over his divorce from Catherine of Aragon in 1533, every West European society was "Catholic". This original religion comprised all Christians except those calling themselves "Orthodox" after the "great schism" of 1050, when the Eastern and Western branches of the Christian Church separated. A key concept was the doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that Christ was actually, as opposed to symbolically, present in the Eucharist); Protestants had many other objections to "Popery", which they saw as exemplified in such aids to worship as crucifixes, rosaries and pictures, and in the veneration of the relics of saints. For over a century, Catholicism was regarded as a threat to the *status quo* and to the political and religious formulations of national identity, perhaps suggesting an anxiety felt by the proponents of the newer Protestantism. Well after Elizabeth I's Act of Uniformity of 1569, the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 prompted panic.<sup>46</sup> In 1660, Catholicism was associated in the minds of the people with absolutism, especially with the perceived absolutist rule of the old enemy, France, in the person of Louis XIV. In 1665, Catholics were blamed for the "Great Fire" of London. It is difficult to know which came first, such feelings or the discovery of the "Gunpowder Plot" and the so called Popish and Rye House plots of 1678 and 1683. Whilst the Gunpowder Plot would have been a distant memory by the time of the Restoration, Charles II seems to have favoured pro-French political policies and obtained loans from his cousin Louis; he only accepted Catholic rites on his death bed, however. Despite the attempted limitations of the Exclusion Act, his brother James succeeded to the

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<sup>45</sup> For estimates of the numbers of Catholics in the population see Coward, *Stuart Age*, pp. 314-15.

<sup>46</sup> This was a plot to blow up Parliament when James I was presiding. As a result, Guy Fawkes was arrested and executed and James required his subjects to take an Oath of Allegiance to him, which included a promise not to bear arms against the sovereign.

throne and the Catholicism to which he had converted was evident, although his efforts to change the English nation back to Catholicism were ultimately ineffectual.<sup>47</sup>

It is worth noting that long after the Civil War, Catholics were again persecuted, along with Protestant nonconformists, by the Clarendon laws which came into force after the Restoration of Charles II.<sup>48</sup> There were several scares during Charles's reign. The "Popish" and "Rye House" Plots, both alarmed the public with perceived, but unproved, threats to murder the king.<sup>49</sup> So strong was anti-Catholic feeling that when James II fled, the English people preferred to be ruled by the partially royal and Protestant William III and his wife Mary, rather than by the Catholic "Old Pretender", James Francis Edward who, as the son of James II and Mary of Modena, actually had the stronger claim to the throne.<sup>50</sup> The Catholic "cause" in its adherence to the right of the "Old Pretender" (James III) to the English throne continued in the Jacobite uprising of 1715; although this attempt failed, another was made in the reign of George II, in 1745, when troops rallied to James III's son, "Bonnie Prince Charlie", ultimately to be defeated by the English army at Culloden. During this uprising, however, proclamations stated that Catholicism would not be re-imposed. Finally, Catholics were no

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<sup>47</sup> Despite championing the Anglican cause, perhaps for political reasons, Charles II seems to have been a Catholic by inclination. Present day tourists to Bruges can visit the convent, the "Engels Klooster", where he attended mass during part of his exile between 1665 and 1669. Phil Lee, *Rough Guide: DIRECTIONS: Bruges and Ghent* (London: Penguin, 2008), pp. 99-100. The convent is described here as "a haven for English Catholic exiles" (p. 99). A discussion of Charles II's pro-French policies and loan from Louis can be found in Coward, *Stuart Age*, pp. 304-13. J.P. Kenyon, in *The Stuarts*, argues that Charles II's subsidy from France in 1681 was "a useful tip, no more". In fact, he alleges, "it is only a strange persistence in thinking of *livres tournois* as directly equivalent to pounds sterling that has led so many historians to brand Charles II as a remittance man of France" (p. 135).

<sup>48</sup> The term "Dissenter" is, however, generally used of non-conforming Protestants, who were careful to dissociate themselves from Catholicism, or "Popery".

<sup>49</sup> Coward devotes two chapters to the impact of Catholicism on the political and religious affairs of England. See Coward, *Stuart Age*, pp. 304-13, 320-22.

<sup>50</sup> Mary and Anne, who became queen in 1702, were brought up as Anglicans by order of Charles II. They were daughters of James II and Anne Hyde, herself a "commoner", albeit one of considerable social rank. Anne, the daughter of Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon from 1661, was lady in waiting to James's eldest sister, Mary, and his first wife. Mary of Modena, James's second wife and mother of James Francis Edward, was, by contrast, of royal blood herself, being the daughter of Alfonso IV of Este, Duke of Modena and Reggio and the Duchess Laura (ODNB). Simply by virtue of being male James Francis Edward would have been expected to take precedence in the succession over his half-sisters. Indeed, Louis XIV openly acknowledged the child as the rightful king of England as soon as he was born. For a "revisionist" view of James II's relationship to Catholic and Protestant followers see Coward, *Stuart Age*, pp. 336-44.

longer considered a threat to the state with the passing of the Papists Act of 1778, in the reign of George III, and although this provoked the Gordon Riots in the same year, in effect Catholics were free from then on to worship undisturbed.<sup>51</sup>

The proliferation of Protestant sects reflects the instability of the era. From the viewpoint of the early eighteenth century the memory of Cromwell and his regime was significant and antipathetical. Although Cromwell's reputation has since been rehabilitated by a number of historians, in 1660 he and his "New Model Army" were associated with regicide and extreme, iconoclastic Puritanism; opinion of him after the Restoration is evident from the exhumation of his body and the display of his head on a pole like an executed traitor. Some of this hatred was deflected on to the Dissenting community. However we interpret this complex period of English history, the outcome seems clear. It suited Charles II and his government to persecute both Catholics and Puritans in the interests of promoting a national religion, Anglicanism. After his death and into the reigns of James II, William III and Anne, the key battles were about establishing a monarchy limited by Parliament and a national Anglican form of Protestantism. What emerges is that religion was a *political* issue. J.A. Downie asserts that, "The most recent general survey of politics under the later Stuarts has reinstated the religious dimension as central to the emergence and development of political parties".<sup>52</sup> Downie goes on to explain how political parties developed through contemporary divisions of opinion over the succession to the English throne, itself a matter of the

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<sup>51</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, p. 307.

<sup>52</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Political and economic writing, Volume 2: Party Politics* ed. J.A. Downie (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), p. 4.

Protestantism or Catholicism of the incumbent. Thus, “religion had been at the heart of the division between Whig and Tory under Charles II”.<sup>53</sup>

Whatever the motives of the returning monarch or of his older-generation chief minister, Clarendon, from the twenty-first century perspective the period of the Restoration was characterised by political and religious instability, while Charles II’s policies and objectives continue to be the subject of debate between historians.<sup>54</sup> Legislation was a tool as much of political as of religious control. The ruling powers attempted to instigate social coherence and stability by establishing a middle-of-the-road “Church of England”, which endorsed the supremacy of Anglicanism, thereby avoiding both the perceived extremism of Cromwell’s era and the threat of “popery”; if the aim was to avoid another civil war, it was successful.

Finally, “comprehension” was also an issue. Throughout the Stuart period, the less extreme members of minority sects thought, at various times, that they were going to be “comprehended”, or included, within the Church of England. Tim Harris describes disagreements at the time of the restoration of Charles II. “Presbyterians and moderate Anglicans favoured keeping certain reforms that would enable most people to be comprehended within a national Church; whilst separatists wanted to be granted liberty of conscience”.<sup>55</sup> Later, discussing religious tensions in more detail, Harris argues that, whilst the failure of toleration is easily explained, the failure of comprehension cannot be put down exclusively to one group, “since the government, the clergy, the gentry, as well as the laity in

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>54</sup> John Spurr, *England in the 1670s* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); J. Uglow, *A Gambling Man: Charles II and the Restoration, 1660-1670* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009); Tim Harris, *Restoration: Charles II and his Kingdoms, 1660-1685* (London: Penguin, 2006).

<sup>55</sup> Tim Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts: Party Conflict in a Divided Society, 1660-1715* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 1993), p. 7.

general, were bitterly divided over what type of Church settlement was desirable”.<sup>56</sup> The actual outcome was the implementation of a series of acts of parliament which heavily penalised Dissent. The most prohibitive of these was arguably the Test Act, since it required any holder of public office to subscribe to the Anglican rites. Considering the matter later, Craig Rose reminds readers that William III “pressed unsuccessfully for the repeal of the sacramental test and the introduction of some form of comprehension”.<sup>57</sup> Despite the efforts of a special commission set up in 1689, an understanding between the Church of England and Dissenters could not be reached. Neither side could find a compromise. According to Rose, “the Church’s long-standing insistence on the episcopal re-ordination of ministers who had received only presbyterian ordination [was an] insuperable barrier in the path of comprehension”.<sup>58</sup> Several archbishops were sympathetic to Dissenters, for instance John Tillotson (primate between 1690 and 1694), Thomas Tenison, (1694-1715) and William Wake (1716-1737). Some bishops were also sympathetic to the Dissenting cause, such as the powerful bishops of Ely, Simon Patrick (1691-1707) and John Moore, of Norwich, (1707-1714). William Fleetwood, whose 1705 book, *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Consider’d in sixteen sermons*, bears a strong resemblance to *The Family Instructor*, also worked for the comprehension of Dissenters, as did Edward Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester from 1689. Perhaps Craig Rose is right that the requirement for re-ordination was the sticking point. It was, after all, an important matter. Were all those marriages, baptisms and funerals carried out by Presbyterian ministers invalidated along with the negation of Presbyterianism? For whatever reason, however, Dissenters remained outside the Church of England.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> Rose, p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 170.

In considering Defoe's own religion a question should be borne in mind. Why should the beliefs of any man or woman be the same at the ages of twenty and fifty-five? The Defoe who admired and copied the sermons of the ejected minister John Collins in 1681 was not the same person who wrote *The Family Instructor*. In 1681 he would have been about twenty, unmarried and certainly without the five children who would have been adult by 1715. In 1681, too, he was intending to be a merchant, not the writer he was to become. By this date, even the potential minister, to whom he referred in the *Review*, was long gone. Maximillian E. Novak, examining the manuscript 'Historical Collections' - which Defoe gave to Mary Tuffley in 1682 when they were engaged - argues that "at this time in his life [... Defoe expressed] strong antipathy for Catholics, Muslims, and Jews".<sup>59</sup> In *The Family Instructor* Defoe shows himself to be much more tolerant of these groups especially (I. 170).

There is no documentary evidence of Defoe's birth and early life, but if we accept the most commonly agreed reconstruction of his origins, he was born into a Dissenting family in London in 1660 or 1661 and brought up in this tradition.<sup>60</sup> Both James Sutherland and Paula Backscheider describe James Foe, Daniel's father, as a "Presbyterian" and both see Defoe as a member of the Dissenting community.<sup>61</sup> Sutherland, somewhat simplistically, uses "Puritan" as synonymous with "Dissenter". To be fair, he was writing in 1937, since when continued scholarship has made finer distinctions possible.<sup>62</sup> Michael Watts also describes Defoe as a "Presbyterian" and as a member of Samuel Annesley's congregation at a Meeting House in Spitalfields.<sup>63</sup> Like all Nonconformists of the time Defoe was debarred from going to university, so attended one of the schools specifically created to give Dissenters a higher

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<sup>59</sup> Novak, *Master of Fictions*, p. 70.

<sup>60</sup> Only John Martin disagrees. No other biographer supports him. John Martin, *Beyond Belief: The real life of Daniel Defoe* (Pembrokeshire: Accent Press, 2006).

<sup>61</sup> Sutherland, p. 1; Backscheider, p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> Sutherland, pp. 15, 23.

<sup>63</sup> Watts, pp. 264, 303.

education, Morton's Academy in Stoke Newington. Defoe's biographers devote considerable attention to his time at Morton's Academy. Novak finds a lengthy description of Morton in *The Compleat English Gentleman*, Defoe's last and posthumously published work. This, Novak says, contains "the best exposition of Morton's system of education".<sup>64</sup> Novak suggests a number of influences on Defoe's later writing which might have their source in his attendance at Morton's. Novak also quotes the damaging description of boys attending Morton's and other Academies by Samuel Wesley in *A Letter from a Country Divine to his Friend*.<sup>65</sup> Paula Backscheider states Defoe "probably entered Morton's academy in 1674" and left "late 1679 or early 1680".<sup>66</sup> Like Novak, she emphasises the originality of Morton's use of English as the medium of instruction and suggests his teaching of science was the most revolutionary.<sup>67</sup> James Sutherland has less to say, confirms that Morton's teaching of science was "noteworthy", but tellingly comments that "what else [Defoe] learnt at the academy it is difficult to say with any certainty". Certainly, an outline of Morton's curriculum and style, however detailed, does not of itself tell us what Defoe learnt at the academy. Regarding Morton himself, Sutherland is the only biographer to point out that he was, apart from being "a man of considerable learning, and – what is not so common among the learned – a quite admirable teacher".<sup>68</sup> Defoe's own views are significant, and he often expressed them throughout his working life. Among his many enemies, John Tutchin and Jonathan Swift attacked the lack of classical learning which resulted from the nature of Defoe's education.<sup>69</sup> He was clearly sensitive about it. But of his religion he had little to say in the context of his education. From his own comment in the *Review* he appears to have set out at one point to

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<sup>64</sup> Novak, *Master of Fictions*, pp. 41-2; Daniel Defoe, *The Compleat English Gentleman*, ed. Karl Bülbring (London: David Nutt, 1890), pp. 218-9.

<sup>65</sup> Samuel Wesley, *A Letter from a Country Divine to his Friend in London, Concerning the Education of Dissenters in their Academies* (London, 1703), pp. 4-5; Novak, *Master of Fictions*, p. 42.

<sup>66</sup> Backscheider, p. 15.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-6.

<sup>68</sup> Sutherland, pp. 19, 21.

<sup>69</sup> Defoe defended what he had learnt at Morton's Academy in the *Review* VIII, 456.

become a pastor. “It was my Disaster first to be set a-part for, and then to be set a-part from the Honour of that Sacred Employ”.<sup>70</sup> Backscheider bears this out in her dating of his attendance at Morton’s. She points out that boys entering the ministry stayed a further year, and therefore Defoe “must have begun the theological curriculum”.<sup>71</sup>

In *More Short Ways with the Dissenters*, Defoe responds to Samuel Wesley’s criticisms in *A Letter from a Country Divine to his Friend*, and confirms that he attended Morton’s Academy: “the Author of these Sheets happens to be one that had, what little Education he can pretend to, under the same Master that Gentleman [i.e. Samuel Wesley] was Taught by, viz. Mr. Charles Morton of Newington Green”. In the same pamphlet he defends the principle of separate education for Dissenters; “But while you shut our Children out of your Schools, never Quarrel at our Teaching them at Schools of our own”.<sup>72</sup> Later, in *The Present State of Parties*, he showed he was aware of the disadvantages of being educated in a Dissenting Academy. “The great imperfection of our academies is want of conversation. [...] Conversation polishes the gentlemen in discourse; acquaints em with men and with words; let them into the polite part of language; gives them style, accent, delicacy, and taste in expression”.<sup>73</sup> James Sutherland goes on to emphasise that “the handicap remained; and the handicap was not being born into the middle class, but being born a Dissenter”.<sup>74</sup>

Throughout his life, Defoe maintained that he had always written in support of the Dissenters, seemingly identifying with their causes. This is not surprising, if we accept that he was

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<sup>70</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Review* VI, 341.

<sup>71</sup> Backscheider, p. 15.

<sup>72</sup> Daniel Defoe, *More Short Ways with the Dissenters* (London, 1704), p.8; S.Wesley Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Cited in Sutherland, p. 24.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

brought up in this tradition. If we take as his view what Robinson Crusoe says to Friday, it seems that Defoe was not much interested in doctrinal disputes. Having described the process of introducing Friday to Christianity, he asserts,

as to all the Disputes, Wranglings, Strife and Contention, which has [sic] happen'd on the World about Religion, whether Niceties in Doctrines, or Schemes of Church Government, they were all perfectly useless to us; as for. ought I can yet see, they have been to all the rest of the World: We had the *sure Guide* to Heaven, viz. The Word of God [...]: and I cannot see the least Use that the greatest Knowledge of the disputed Points in Religion which have made such Confusions in the World would have been to us, if we could have obtain'd it.<sup>75</sup>

The author of *An Attempt towards a Coalition of English Protestants*, printed in the same year as the first volume of *The Family Instructor*, expresses a similar idea:

For certain it is at the last Day, when all Flesh shall appear before God at the general *Audit*, the Question will not be whether I am a *Dissenter* or a *Churchman*? Whether *High* or *Low*? But whether I have serv'd God according to the Dictates of my own Conscience, regulated by the Precepts of *Holy Writ*?<sup>76</sup>

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When he came to write *The Family Instructor* in 1715, Defoe was at pains to point out that although the book sets out to promote Protestantism, it is not partisan. In his Introduction he says that in the work “Care is taken to avoid Distinctions of Opinion, as to Church of *England* or *Dissenter*, and no Offence can be taken here either on the one Side or the other;

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<sup>75</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 221-2.  
<sup>76</sup> *Towards a Coalition of English Protestants, from the Weakness of the Pretensions of the several Parties, for being either better Christians, or better subjects, upon any Principles, wherein they differ. To which is added, Reasons for restraining the Licentiousness of the Pulpit and Press* (London, 1715), p. 37. The authorship of this pamphlet is disputed. By some regarded as being written by Defoe (Downie, Hutchins, Moore, Novak, Trent), it is de-attributed by P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens in *Defoe De-attributions: A Critique of J.R. Moore's "Checklist"* (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), p. 78. Backscheider's copious bibliography does not list the work as being by or attributed to Defoe. Backscheider, pp. 617-25.

as I hope *both* are Christians, so *both* are treated here as such, and the Advice is impartially directed *to both* without the least distinction”. How far is this borne out in the work? At the end of the First Dialogue he emphasises this point, hoping that the work will be “useful and acceptable to all Denominations of Christians” (I. 68). Later he re-inforces the point. In his Notes to the Second Dialogue he asserts,

by the Word Church, in all these Dialogues, is to be understood the Place, and *going to* the Place of Publick Worship, whether in the Church of *England* People to their Parish Churches, or in Dissenters to their several Meeting Houses, the particular distinguishing it one way or another being studiously avoided here; the Subject, as the Author humbly conceives, being not at all concern'd in our diversity of Opinions, Sects, or separate Assemblies, but equally instructing to all who call themselves Christians, and especially Protestant Christians. (I. 46)

This, he explains, would detract from his purpose, which is to direct his work to all Protestants (I. 46). Whilst these remarks could be seen as no more than an attempt to sell more copies of the book, Dissenters forming a small proportion of the population at the time, there is evidence that conduct books, including those relating to home worship, were written for all Christians. The moral literature of the period includes works by Anglican bishops such as Edmund Gibson, and by Jesuits, like William Darrell, as well as by many Dissenters. Thus Defoe’s claim is true in relation to content and intention. It is also borne out by his references throughout the work to members of various types of Protestant. One of the ways in which Defoe achieves his aim is through the second son in Volume I. He is described as “about Seventeen Years of Age, and newly come from the University” (I.123). This suggests his is an Anglican family. The “University” of the day would be either Oxford or Cambridge and after the passage of the Act of Uniformity in 1662, only those who agreed to its terms were eligible to send their sons to university. Those who dissented from the Act (i.e. Dissenters) rendered themselves ineligible for many social benefits and had to find other ways of

educating their young men. This led to the foundation of Dissenting “Academies”.<sup>77</sup> At times Defoe is quite specific. In Volume I, during the fifth Dialogue, the younger daughter, Betty, compares their family with that of her aunt. This conversation follows:

Mother: Your Aunt is a Dissenter, you know.

Betty: *But Madam, My Uncle is a Churchman, and, let them be which they will, I see no difference in their Conversation. They all agree to be a religious, sober, pious Family.* (I. 120).

In the discussions between the two apprentices in Volume I, Thomas emphasises that all Christians, indeed, all mankind, have a common regard for worship. To his companion apprentice, William, he remarks,

there is a Popish Family lives next door to my Father’s, and they are constantly Morning and Evening, and often at other times of the Day too, at their Worship and Prayers, serving God in their Way; nay, I have heard, that the *Turks* say their Prayers Five Times a Day: Why, it is natural to pray to God, *Will, did not he make us?* (I. 170).

In the fifth dialogue of Volume II the wealthy shopkeeper is a “Dissenter [whose] wife had been bred in Conformity to the Church” which the husband sees as a potential stumbling block in the instigation of family worship. When they come to debate the proper behaviour of fathers and masters of households the wife brings this up; she is convinced that although they have “differing Thoughts of the Manner and forms of Worship [...] GOD to whom we pray certainly respects the Heart, and not the Form” (II. 231). Both volumes contain many other examples, offering evidence that Defoe saw no difference between these two types of Protestantism and bears out his claim that the work is designed for both Anglicans and Dissenters.

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<sup>77</sup> See p. 14 above for the effect of the laws of the Clarendon Code; Backscheider, p. 7.

However, the characteristics of early Puritanism listed by Christopher Hill are also evident in Defoe's work. Sometimes, clearly, Defoe's Dissenting origins seem to outweigh his more eclectic intentions; in fact his writing of this work, as well as of others, is redolent with his Dissenting heritage. In the sixth dialogue of Volume I, for instance, he displays the Puritan disapproval of "swearing". Following an "accidental Conversation" with a young Gentleman neighbour, the young man has had some religious instruction from the Gentleman's mother. "She said, I must promise her not *to swear*, nor take *God's Name in vain*: She told me, *that as I was a Gentleman*, and my Father and Mother were Persons of Distinction: *that* it was not only a Sin against God, but below me, *as a Gentleman*, *to swear*, and *use ill Words*; *that* if I should swear when I grew to be a Man, *it would spoil all my Education*, and no sober Man would keep me Company" (I. 126). Here Defoe seems to be combining the Anglican idea of gentility with the importance which "swearing" had for the Puritan tradition.<sup>78</sup> The dislike of swearing recurs in Volume II with the little boy, Jacky's, concern for his mother's soul (II. 200). In the same volume the uncle who stays at the house of the young, newly married couple, and who succeeds in helping the husband to instigate family worship, is described as a "minister", thus clearly a Dissenting Christian (II. 24). A similar value is given by the apprentice Tom to the neighbouring household where he finds solace in its religious routines (I. 199).

There is also the matter of biblical quotations. The Bible was particularly significant for all Protestants, considered as "the sole source of revealed truth".<sup>79</sup> "He is incomprehensible, Child," the first father tells his small son in the first volume of *The Family Instructor*, "*you cannot find out God: But in this Book, the Bible, you may learn enough to save you, and bring you to him*" (I. 63). Biblical quotations occur frequently in the work. In Volume II

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<sup>78</sup> The young Jack, for whom the pursuit of gentility was paramount, was to come to a similar conclusion. Daniel Defoe, *Colonel Jack* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 61, "it is not like a Gentleman to swear" [etc.].

<sup>79</sup> *Christian Dictionary*, p. 1339.

alone, there are over eighty-one quotations from a variety of books of the bible, and many references to biblical stories. About half of these quotations are from the Old Testament, but the reader is struck by the variety of their sources. Over a random twenty pages in Volume II for instance, Defoe quotes from Genesis, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Luke, Colossians and Timothy (II. 203 – 223).

The Sabbatarianism mentioned by Hill as a characteristic of Puritanism is also evident in *The Family Instructor*. This constitutes the importance of keeping the Sabbath (Sunday) undefiled by a range of non-religious activity. In Dialogue 6 of Volume I its importance is stressed (I. 123 – 4). The correct behaviour on Sundays is spelt out through the younger son's attendance at the family next door, where the father reads a sermon, each child then "read a chapter", psalms were sung and finally prayers said (I. 129).<sup>80</sup> Again, in Dialogue 8 in Volume I, the elder daughter's maid, Pru, describes the changes brought about in the household, when the first father introduces family worship. She reports him as wishing, among other changes, that "the *Sabbath-day* might be strictly observed" (I. 151).

The importance of the Sabbatarianism described by Hill also applied to Dissenters, however. Julian Hoppit states that "Sabbatarians [...] stood decisively outside the religious mainstream" and Isobel Rivers reminds us that Nonconformists included those who "Spent the Lord's Day in Religious Exercises". She also confirms that towards the end of his life Richard Baxter could often be seen "attending Church of England services".<sup>81</sup> In the opening chapter of his best known work Christopher Hill attempts "The Definition of a Puritan" concluding that "the main stream of puritan thought, as I define it, is associated with men like Perkins, Bownde, Preston, Sibbes, Thomas Taylor, William Gouge, Thomas Goodwin, Richard Baxter

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<sup>80</sup> Both James I and Charles I had passed acts legitimising certain forms of recreation on Sundays. James I, *The Book of Sports* (London, 1618); Charles I, *The Book of Sports* (London, 1633). Charles II passed an *Act for the Better Observation of the Lord's Day* in 1677, forbidding all work and travel on Sunday, but not mentioning any recreation; *Christian Dictionary*, pp. 1533-4.

<sup>81</sup> Hoppit, p. 218; Rivers, pp. 90-1; p. 101.

[...because] they adopted comparable attitudes to most of the problems examined in this book”.<sup>82</sup> Hill later argued that “Sabbatarianism, formerly the hall-mark of Puritanism, was accepted by the Church of England after 1660” in connection with the growth of industrialisation, he suggests.<sup>83</sup> “Finally,” he concludes, “the 1677 Sabbath Act summed up the legislation of the revolutionary epoch which proscribed Sunday work”.<sup>84</sup>

The tendency to see theatre as corrupting is also typical of the Puritan outlook. In 1639-40, in the context of his description of the “fruitless and dissolute manner” of his life before his conversion, Richard Norwood confesses, “At Stratford, when I was near 15 [sic] years of age being drawn in by other young men of the town, I acted a womans [sic] part in a stage play”.<sup>85</sup> Among other Puritan writers, William Prynne wrote a vitriolic condemnation of the stage in his *Histriomastix*.<sup>86</sup> Although both these examples are from the pre-revolutionary era, in *The Family Instructor*, theatre is invariably portrayed negatively. In Volume I, for instance, in the introduction to the fourth dialogue, when discussing the difficulties of introducing religious worship in a family where the older children are used to a more worldly way of living, Defoe lists the theatre among the temptations. “They had been indulg’d in all possible Folly and Levity, such as *Plays, Gaming, Looseness of Life, and Irreligious Behaviour*” (I. 95). In Volume II, the father in conversation with the enquiring “Citizen” acknowledges that he met the woman he was to marry at “the Temple of Wickedness, the Play-House [...] There I chose me a Wife” (II. 15). In the same volume this wife tells her

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<sup>82</sup> Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1964), p. 15.

<sup>83</sup> Christopher Hill, *Some Intellectual Consequences of the English Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980), p.68.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>85</sup> Richard Norwood, *Confessions, Grace Abounding*, pp. 126, 256.

<sup>86</sup> William Prynne, *Histriomastix, the Players Scourge* (London, 1633); Sommerville., p. 16.

husband “her delight is in Company, Cards, the Play, and all the gay Things of the Times” (II. 31).

The clearest doctrinal exposition in the first volume of *The Family Instructor* is in the initial conversation between the first father and his youngest son. He questions his father about “God”, thereby prompting the original guilt in his father at not having given his family any religious upbringing; this guilt leads the father to instigate religious practice in the family thereafter, propelling the narrative from then on. First the technique of “catechising”, of learning the basics of religion by question and answer, suggests the format of the Westminster Catechisms, approved by the Westminster Assembly in 1647 and by Cromwell’s Parliament in September 1648.<sup>87</sup> Then, the answers given to the child, that not all Christians are “saved”, look very much like the Calvinist doctrine of election, although P.N. Furbank argues that only here does Defoe expound so specific a religious position (I. 20-1). All religions, with the exception of Judaism, use catechisms. They have continued to be updated to the present day. Thus, the catechising of the little boy in Volume I is not of itself denominational. Only his answer referring to “election” suggests a Calvinist position.

In Volume II, published in 1718, three years after the first volume, Defoe again attempts to define his religious beliefs in the crucial, central part when, in the third Dialogue, Sir Richard discusses his change of heart with his brother-in-law, the reforming “Friend”. For about ten pages Defoe explains, through their conversation, his understanding of “Grace”. Defoe

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<sup>87</sup> The Westminster Assembly, formed in 1643, was “the synod appointed by the Long Parliament to reform the English Church”. It included representatives from a range of Protestant sects, such as Presbyterians, Independents and Episcopalians. Among the most significant of its activities were the adoption of the “Solemn League and Covenant”, a revision of the 39 Articles according to dissenting principles and the two Westminster Catechisms, the Larger and the Shorter, which continue in use by Scottish Presbyterians today. *Christian Dictionary*, pp. 1732, 1515.

focuses on Sir Richard's sense of his own sin and his attempts to understand the free gift of God's Grace. The brother-in-law spends some time trying to explain the difference between Grace and the Spirit of God, finally saying, "Love of GOD *to us*, must be from his own infinite GRACE; the Love of GOD *in us*, is the Operation of Grace by the Spirit". Sir Richard replies, "I can make little of all this" and the reader is inclined to agree (II. 111). Two things are clear however. First, a sense of sin overwhelms the penitent; then God's true message is "revealed". Both these states are brought about by God's grace, which is "freely given", rather than resulting from being sought.

However difficult it may be to define, whenever Grace is mentioned it usually carries the orthodox Christian meaning, namely that it can be sought by prayer, but it remains God's gift, granted according to His will only. The first father describes his small son as a recipient of "converting Grace" (I. 54). A few pages later Defoe sets out the workings of Grace through the father's explanation to this same small son, "it is the meer Grace and Good-will of God" (I. 59). Thus, in Part II, it is "God's Grace" which converts the apprentice Will, not his friend Tom, although the latter is the means through which this happens, and it is through Grace that the elder daughter ultimately "submits" to her father and to God (I. 238, 301-2). Despite the example of his sister, the elder son remains without Grace till he dies, "Atheistical and Impenitent" (I. 324). In the second volume, the neighbour exhorts the passionate father to be less severe to his son, saying, "I hope the Influence of sovereign Grace will restrain you from such Extreams" (II. 153). Sir Richard ends up possessing Grace; his admiring "Companions" do not (II. 120).

It may be worth emphasising this lapse of three years between the publication of the two volumes of *The Family Instructor*. In the first volume, the first father's reference to the doctrine of "election" suggests Defoe is presenting a Calvinist faith. In the second, he seems to have broadened his belief, in that penitence and revelation characterise both Anglican and Puritan forms of Christianity. Indeed, he seems aware of the debate over the relative value of belief and ethics, the debate over the extent to which Christians could influence the condition of the after-life by actions taken in this life. The brother-in-law says to Sir Richard, "Dear Sir, let me be very cautious of running you so early, into those dangerous Niceties and Distinctions between what we can do, and our being able to do nothing" (II. 112). The phrase "dangerous Niceties and Distinctions" suggests Defoe's disapproval of doctrinal dispute already illustrated earlier.

In several instances religion is associated with illness, even insanity. For instance, the first wife in Volume II objects to her husband's introducing family worship, but "at length was taken ill" (II. 52). Then "a deep Melancholy seemed to succeed the Fever" (II. 53). The apothecary decides "*she is mad, quite distracted, we must get some Help immediately to tie her in the Bed*" (II. 53), whereupon the husband is overcome with smallpox, from which he recovers. The wife, however, sinks further into a "Melancholy Lunacy", reading her Bible, but not communicating with husband or family, till at last she recovers sufficiently to accept and participate in her husband's religious regime, though not regaining her mental stability (II. 53-40). Her memory loss makes it impossible for her to see her past actions as having moral significance. Geoffrey Sill stresses the "importance of looking backwards during conversion".<sup>88</sup> Indeed, the husband and friend debate whether without self-awareness the woman can be said to be truly converted. The older daughter in Volume I, who goes to live with her aunt and marries, is also ill at her repentance; her mother tells her aunt that she "fell

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<sup>88</sup> Geoffrey Sill, *Defoe and the Idea of Fiction: 1713-1719* (London & Toronto: Association of University Presses, Inc., 1983), pp. 110-14.

very sick” (I. 250). Furthermore, the last letter from her dying brother induces a “high fever” in her (I. 294, 296-7). The apprentice, Will, exemplifies the link between religion and unhappiness. He is less appealing after his “conversion” than before it. As a result of his religion he becomes a miserable fellow, who “play’d none, laugh’d none, and hardly was seen to smile” (I. 188).<sup>89</sup>

Can Defoe really be suggesting that the implementation of family worship has such disastrous effects? This would undercut his main thesis; elsewhere he is keen to stress the harmony and the benefits, the essential happiness of households run on the “godly” lines he is advocating. For instance, the younger son of the first family compares their own behaviour with that of the family next door. He says,

they appear *so* modest, *so* sober, and yet *so* decently and genteely affable and pleasant, that I think they live quite another Life than we do: *They never* swear, nor use lewd and prophane Words in their Discourse; *they never* sit up all Night at Cards, or go a Visiting a *Sundays*, nor do a hundred foolish things that our Family makes a Trade of, *and yet* they live as merrily, comfortably, sociably, and genteely as we do (I. 101).

Similarly, the young wife’s relative, the Minister, who stays with the newly-weds and introduces family worship for the husband, spells out its benefits. As well as restoring “order” and setting a good example to “Servants and Children”, it is “for the Advantage, Example, and Encouragement of all under their Roof” (II. 29).

Several words and ideas, such as duty, reason, nature and providence, resonate throughout the work. There are many references to duty in Volume I, not surprisingly perhaps, as it is a major theme of the work. The Father’s duty is central, though all the characters have some

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<sup>89</sup> In fact, Defoe is here probably indicating that religious conversion is so traumatic, as we might say, that it induces illness. Robinson Crusoe’s “conversion” also took place during a fever; see Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.87.

sort of duty demanded of them. The Father's is primarily towards God, but also to his children. He owes God and them the duty to bring them up religiously. He and his wife also have mutual duties; the children all have duties towards their parents. Through the Brother in Volume II Defoe echoes the moral literature of the time when he emphasises that the duty of children towards their parents holds regardless of the parents' behaviour towards the children. The brother tells the maid, "let my Father be as passionate as he will, his Children should not fail in the least part of their Duty; sure the Duty of Children is not a conditional debt" (II. 174-5). Similarly, the neighbour assures the passionate father that "tho the Parent may fail of his Duty to his Child, yet that by no means dispenses with the Duty of a child, because the child's Obedience is not founded upon the Father's Conduct, but upon the Laws of Nature" (II. 56-7). Richard Allestree, putative author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, says, "no unkindness, no fault of the parent, can acquit the childe of this duty".<sup>90</sup> The thread runs through the whole of Defoe's volume. Since the Master (the Alderman) of Part II has apprentices he is *in loco parentis* and therefore has a similar duty towards them as does their natural father. He finally acknowledges this duty after his conversation with Tom's biological father, introducing daily prayers not just for his apprentices, and for his family, but for his whole household (I. 222-225).

Duty intersects with "nature". Defoe emphasises the "natural Duty of all Creatures to worship and serve *the Being that created them*" and on the next page he refers to "the natural known Duty which we can't omit" (I. 281-2). There are far fewer references to Nature in the whole work, though ultimately Nature is allied with Duty; prayer is described as "natural" (I. 283). That human nature has been corrupted by original sin is introduced early into the work through the conversation between the first father and his small son (I. 59, 90). "Nature"

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<sup>90</sup> Allestree, *Duty*, p. 293.

presents more difficulties than “Duty”, however, since it has to bear a number of different meanings. The child’s questions about his origins and the meaning of life are natural, as is the duty of parents to offer their children a religious upbringing, and their children have a “natural [...] contempt” for those parents who fail in this Duty (I. 81-83). Sometimes the word has its modern sense; for instance, “ignorance [is] the natural Consequence of want of Instruction” (I. 84). Defoe also refers to “natural” as opposed to “revealed” religion.<sup>91</sup> The relationship between natural and revealed religion is explicit. First, the young child who initiates the reform of his parents in Volume I asks questions which are “Natural and Rational” (I. 47). His father also confirms that this son is a “rational Creature”, not an animal (I. 49). His reason takes him part of the way, in that the basic religious principles he “infers by the meer Power of Natural Reasoning” (I. 82). Ultimately, however, “natural Religion [is] join’d with reveal’d Religion [to] discover Christ” (I. 83). A key work on the meaning of “nature” for Defoe is Maximillian E. Novak’s *Defoe and the Nature of Man*, although the author’s focus is on Defoe’s “fiction”. Novak argues that all Defoe’s fiction has a moral purpose, based on his “allegiance to the laws of nature”.<sup>92</sup> He also contends that “Defoe’s ‘nature’ is a hodge-podge of traditional Puritanism, the rationalism of the Boyle lectures, and the ideas of Thomas Burnet”.<sup>93</sup> It was likely that Defoe was exposed to the methods and ideas of Robert Boyle because Defoe’s teacher, Charles Morton, was “a fellow at Wadham College during the residency of the ‘Oxonian Sparkles’, men like Robert Boyle, Christopher Wren,

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<sup>91</sup> In a note P.N. Furbank states that such natural religion was “worked out in great detail in the Middle Ages” (I. 327). The *Christian Dictionary* agrees, defining Natural Theology as, “the body of knowledge about God that may be obtained by human reason alone, without the aid of revelation”, (*Christian Dictionary*, p. 1132). Natural theology is sometimes considered to be part of philosophy, and described for example as “The Philosophy of Religion”. The *Dictionary* states that “natural theology was regarded as the prelude to revealed theology” (which would accord with Defoe’s position as expressed in *The Family Instructor*), but that Philosophy of Religion “takes no cognizance of the distinction”, which goes back to St. Thomas Aquinas (pp. 1281, 1392). Although Philosophy of Religion takes “many forms [it is mainly associated with the] rationalist eighteenth century approach to religion” as found in the works of David Hume and Emmanuel Kant, and later, most famously in the writings of Hegel (Ibid., p. 821).

<sup>92</sup> Novak, *Nature*, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

Thomas Sprat, and William Petty”.<sup>94</sup> These men all went on to be members of the Royal Society. Although never elected as a member, in 1675 Morton did present a paper to this body entitled “The Improvement of Cornwall by Sea-sand”.<sup>95</sup> Samuel Wesley famously mentioned the “Laboratory” and the “Air-pump”, which was invented by Boyle, as teaching aids at Morton’s Dissenting Academy in Newington Green.<sup>96</sup> Backscheider contends that Defoe “admired” Boyle’s work, though she gives no evidence for this.<sup>97</sup> What were Boyle’s ideas concerning nature? A natural philosopher, towards the end of his life Boyle published “several key works on philosophical and religious topics”, including *Free Enquiry into the Vulgarly Receiv’d Notion of Nature* (1686), *Discourse of Things above Reason* (1686) and *Disquisition about the Final Cause of Natural Things* (1688).<sup>98</sup> Michael Hunter argues that Boyle “laid stress on the extent to which God’s omniscience transcended the limited bounds of human reason” and that he was always “fiercely hostile to views of nature that he saw as detracting from a proper appreciation of God’s power in his creation”. Nothing in this description contradicts Defoe’s views on Nature as expressed in *The Family Instructor*. Could he have attended the Boyle lectures? These were instigated after Boyle’s death, from 1692, and included papers by Samuel Clarke on “*The Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion*” in 1705, and by Josiah Woodward on “*The Divine Original and Excellence of the Christian Religion*” in 1710, but we have no evidence that Defoe heard them.

Was Defoe familiar with Thomas Burnet’s work? Burnet died in 1715. A Cambridge theologian and chaplain to William III after John Tillotson, Burnet was also interested in geology. In 1681 he published his most famous and controversial work, *Telluris theora sacra*,

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<sup>94</sup> Backscheider, p. 14.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 545.

<sup>96</sup> S. Wesley, *A Letter from a Country Divine to his Friend*, p. 7.

<sup>97</sup> Backscheider, p. 520.

<sup>98</sup> Michael Hunter, *The Life and Thought of Robert Boyle*

<[www.bbk.co.uk/history/historic\\_figures/boyle\\_robert.shtml](http://www.bbk.co.uk/history/historic_figures/boyle_robert.shtml)> [accessed 7 May 2012].

translated between 1684 and 1689 as *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*. His views on nature as expressed in this work are strikingly similar to those of Boyle and Defoe. Burnet argues that nature is “the powers of Matter, with the laws establisht for their action and conduct” and that God is “the Author of Nature, superiour both to Humane Power and Humane Wisdom [...] The very Existence of Matter is a proof of Deity”.<sup>99</sup> In spite of the controversy caused by his book, these views seem very similar to those of Boyle and of Defoe here expressed.

Novak argues that Defoe is not typical of contemporary attitudes towards “Nature”, indeed is “in distinct opposition to the thoughts of the time”; followers of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson emphasised that man was “naturally good”, whereas Defoe “insists that corruption, not virtue, is natural to man”.<sup>100</sup> We have seen evidence of this already. But other contemporary writers emphasise similar characteristics. For instance, John Tillotson, an Anglican, also emphasises the corruption of human nature. Further, Novak’s “followers of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson” do not represent all contemporary attitudes towards nature, only one strand of thinking. However, as we shall also see, Defoe portrays the first family as highly emotional, which could be said to foreshadow the “sentimentalism” of later eighteenth-century writing. In sum, his attitude towards “nature” in the work gives evidence of Defoe’s transitional position.

As background to an exploration of absolutism in the reigns of James I and Charles I J.P. Sommerville devotes nearly five pages to a description of “The Law of Nature”.<sup>101</sup> He concludes that,

there was very wide agreement among Englishmen on the existence of a natural law inscribed by God in the hearts of men and discoverable by reason. Indeed, the notions

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<sup>99</sup> Thomas Burnet, *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*, II, Chap10, [www.sentex.net/~Burnet/html](http://www.sentex.net/~Burnet/html) [accessed 7 May 2012].

<sup>100</sup> Novak, *Nature*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>101</sup> Sommerville, pp. 12-17.

that the law of nature is reason, implanted by God at the creation, that it is a rule of right and wrong, and that it is superior to any human law, were commonplaces.<sup>102</sup>

Sommerville also contends that there is “no evidence” to support the assertion that only “Anglicans [...] adopted natural law theories”, emphasising that “the doctrine of natural law was held to be compatible with a Calvinist theology of grace”.<sup>103</sup> However, Sommerville is writing about an era which pre-dates Defoe’s young manhood in the 1680s, and in the interim a number of significant events had taken place, such as, the execution of Charles I, the Commonwealth era, the Restoration of Charles II and the passing of the Clarendon laws. Useful as the work of Sommerville is, therefore, his discussion of “nature” should probably not be taken as an explanation of Defoe’s.

In Volume II, reason is opposed to passion and acts as a guiding principle. The neighbour reminds the Father that, “Passion divests the Soul of the use of its Reason” (II. 33). Coupling it with “Duty”, the Captain urges Margy to teach her young charge “all that your Reason and Sense of Duty shall direct you” (II. 193). “Reason” is often coupled with other key terms. For instance, for the Friend’s wife to leave him is against “Reason and Nature” (II. 74). Later, the term is opposed to “natural Temper” (II. 132) and later still the Neighbour convinces the passionate father that his behaviour is inconsistent with “Nature, Reason and Religion” (II. 155). For Defoe, then, reason, whilst it remains subordinate to “religion”, like every human quality, distinguishes humankind from animals and seems always a higher moral principle, superior to “nature” and capable of overcoming its baser instincts.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. *The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, eds Davis, Herbert, et al, 16 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 1939-68), IX.,263. In *Thoughts on Religion*, Swift mentions two exceptions to the “baser instincts”, namely, “the propagation of the species” and “the love of life”.

References to Providence recur in Defoe's writing. This term relates to a particularly Puritan way of interpreting human experience. It is linked to the "signs" so important to Puritans, of their "election". J. Paul Hunter has examined at length the connections between *Robinson Crusoe* and the "Providence tradition". He argues that such works "aimed at convincing laymen of God's intervention in human affairs, rather than debating the issue on a theological or philosophical level".<sup>105</sup> Defoe's *The Storm*, first published in 1704, examines the relationship between God's intentions as expressed in extreme natural disasters and human activity. In his *Preface*, to *The Storm*, Defoe refers to "*the strong Evidence God has been pleas'd to give in this terrible manner to his own Being*"; later he reminds the reader that his purpose in writing the work is to memorialise "*the dreadfullest and most universal Judgment that ever Almighty Power thought fit to bring upon this Part of the World.*" When he came to write *A Journal of the Plague Year*, published in 1722, this relationship was still an issue.<sup>106</sup> In the work under discussion, Providence is mentioned in both volumes. It can act benevolently, almost like Grace, but it can also embody a type of vengeance. For instance, "unexpected Providential Accidents" occur to enable the Merchant to carry out his duty in Volume I; his perceived difficulties are "providentially removed" (I. 225-6; 241). Conversely, the neighbour warns the passionate father that Providence can remove children from parents who "neglect the due Government of their Families" (II. 134.). Ultimately the neighbour's intervention itself is seen as "providential" by the father (II. 147). The neighbour himself refers to the "merciful providences" which finally occurred in his examples to the passionate father (II. 159). Providence can also act as a kind of fate. The daughter of this family bemoans "God's Providence" which has given her and her brother "such a Tyrant for a Father" (II. 170).

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<sup>105</sup> M. Hunter, p.60.

<sup>106</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Storm*, ed. Richard Hamblyn (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 6-7.

There can be little doubt that religion in *The Family Instructor* is an emotional business. In the opening dialogue the father is overcome with emotion when his small son's questions make him aware of his failed duty (I. 53). When the maid Pru reports this father's speech to the whole family, his older daughter is moved despite herself (I. 151). Feelings run high throughout and they are not always positive. For instance, the eldest son of the opening dialogue is first angry with the servant, Thomas, for refusing to take him and his sister out in the coach (I. 96). Later, his anger is directed towards his father (I.131-2). Religious awakening is always an emotional matter. Will is seized with "Rapture" at God's goodness and his fellow-apprentice, Tom's "Heart was so full he cried for Joy, and could not speak a Word" (I. 198, 241). The sense of sin which overwhelms the "country Alderman" brings tears to his eyes, "in Spight of all my Endeavours to the contrary" (I. 23). When the elder daughter of the first family, now married, is finally sensible of her sins and God's goodness, once recovered from her "Fever", she "breaks out in an Extasy of Thankfulness" (I. 302-3). Her husband finally "embraces her with Tears of Joy" (I. 305). In Volume II, the first three dialogues centre on the problems experienced by two husbands whose wives object to their introducing family worship. Emotions again run high, partly evident in the mockery of the wives, but also in the husband's feelings. The first husband is "exceedingly afflicted at his wife's sickness"; when he relates all this to his Friend the wife's plight "brought Tears into his eyes" (II. 55.). Defoe's characters behave very like those in the sentimental works which appeared in the late eighteenth century. For instance, the father in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) dies relatively early in the narrative, but before then, like the first father here, he sheds tears on a number of occasions.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 1-82.

Defoe is careful to distinguish such emotions from “enthusiasm”, however, which in this work generally has pejorative overtones. The elder brother of the first family jeers at his father’s “Enthusiastick Fits of Repentance” (I. 148). Similarly, Defoe is quick to assure the reader that the apprentice Will’s conversion is “far from Enthusiastical” (I. 185). These are the only references to “Enthusiasm”, however; there are none in Volume II.<sup>108</sup>

Sometimes the modern reader notices a certain lack of charity in the religious conversions depicted. There is a kind of selfishness, for instance, in the first father’s new-found Duty. He owns its implications without recognising them for what they are. He says, “*they* that are guilty shall be to blame, *not I*” (I. 134). Again, of the opposition of his two older children he says, “if [they] would go on, it should no longer be thro’ my Omission, but *their own*” (I. 133). Similarly he says, “if they oppose me *never so much*, I am resolv’d of this; if they will be foolish and wicked, they shall be *foolish* and *wicked* for themselves, not *for me*, or for any body else” (I. 124). In other words, provided he has done his Duty, they do not matter. When the Aunt tells him her son by a former marriage will marry his daughter he says, “I will have no Blame if she proves all that’s wicked to him” (I. 257). To this same husband the father eventually says, “you have nothing to blame me for” (I. 292). He hardens his heart against this daughter. “I will not now accept her Submission” (I. 293). It seems an essentially narrow minded view of humanity, and lacking the charity shown by the troubled husbands to their wives in Volume II.

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<sup>108</sup> The SOED defines enthusiasm as meaning originally “possession by a god”, but in 1716, “rapturous intensity of feeling [...] passionate eagerness in any pursuit”. This dictionary also remarks that “in the eighteenth century it [often referred to] ill-regulated emotion or speculation” (*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols (London: Book Club Associates, 1938; repr.1984), I, 664.

There are significant similarities between *The Family Instructor* and sermon 50 preached by John Tillotson at the church of St. Lawrence Jewry on 13 June, 1684.<sup>109</sup> At the start he comments that the practice of family worship is “strangely overlook’d and neglected in this loose and degenerate age”. Defoe similarly states that “we are, I say, arrived at a Time in which Men will frankly own a thing to be their Duty, which *at the same time they* dare omit the Practice of” (I. 45). There are many references to “Duty” and Tillotson stresses the central message of the sermon as “the *pious Care* of a good *Master and Father* of a *Family* to train up those under his Charge in the Worship and Service of the true God”. The characteristics he urges are the same as Defoe’s: family worship is to be organised into morning and evening prayer, reading scripture, especially the New Testament and the “psalms of David”. Similarly, the whole family should attend church on Sunday and then family members should be “instructed at *Home*, by having the *Scriptures* and other good *Books* read to them”. Tillotson mentions the many “*Helps* [...] and] Other pious and profitable Books”, exemplified by *The Whole Duty of Man*, the same work the mother exchanges for the plays on her daughter’s bookshelf (I. 97). Tillotson also stresses the “solemn acknowledgement of the Providence of God, by begging his Blessing at our *Meals*”. This practice, he says, has become unfashionable, despite being “a piece of *Natural Religion*”. This echoes an argument in *The Family Instructor* between one of the wives and her husband in Volume II. She argues that saying Grace is “ungenteel” (II. 19). Just before this, the Friend tells the Citizen about his stay at Sir Richard’s shortly after his marriage to Sir Richard’s sister; Sir Richard is castigated for never saying Grace “at the Table”. This failure is part of his “heathenish” ways, just as Tillotson describes its decline as evidence of “Atheism”. Tillotson also groups together “Children and Servants” several times, emphasising that both should be instructed in the “Principles of Religion” and taught to read; so also does Defoe (I. 46). Finally, Tillotson

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<sup>109</sup> John Tillotson, *The Works of the most Reverend Dr. John Tillotson*, 3 vols (London, 1735), I. 479- 91.

stresses the importance of “giving *good Examples* to our *Families*”; failure undermines “Authority”. Defoe mentions the importance of example on various occasions; for instance he emphasises that the story of the father and mother of the first volume are to be regarded as an “Example” (I. 47).

Tillotson wrote three more sermons on the same biblical text devoted to “The Education of Children” (sermons number 51, 52 and 53). There are again similarities with Defoe’s work. Here Tillotson takes the familiar stance against “Plays [...] gaming and Revelling till past Midnight”. We are reminded of Defoe’s characterisation of the theatre as morally reprehensible, for instance, when the father of the first volume requires his elder son to stop going to plays (I. 138-9). Although it is a commonplace of moral literature of the time, it is significant that both writers see the necessity of starting religious education early. Tillotson says children should be taught religion “upon the first budding and appearance of Reason and Understanding”.<sup>110</sup> Defoe is aware of the difficulty of introducing religion later. This is expressed initially through the anxiety of the first father regarding his older children’s reaction, “after their green and tender Years are past, in which they are moulded *like Wax to a seal*” (I. 68). There are many later references in both volumes. Both writers also share an understanding of the corruption of human nature through “the Fall”. Tillotson argues that one reason for religious teaching is the hope that it can “rectify [...] our corrupt and degenerate Nature [...] by the abundant Grace of the Gospel”.<sup>111</sup> Defoe, through the first father’s explanations to his small son, says, “Man’s Sin is a corrupt taint which we all bring into the World with us” (I. 59).

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 491.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 483.

What, if any, connections can we find between Defoe and Tillotson? Paula Backscheider, describing the “usefulness of [Defoe’s] City and Dissenting friends in the years between 1660 and 1703”, finds that Defoe and Tillotson had a publisher in common. She maintains that “Richard Chiswell, had printed two of Defoe’s allegiance pamphlets” and Chiswell also “had had a huge success with Tillotson’s sermons”.<sup>112</sup> She refers to Chiswell as one of “a large, active group of Nonconformist publishers” who were “among the most respected men in the business”.<sup>113</sup> Tony Claydon points out that Chiswell also published works by Gilbert Burnet, Simon Patrick, Thomas Tenison and sometimes Stillingfleet, Wake and Kidder as well as Tillotson.<sup>114</sup> Could Defoe have heard this sermon by Tillotson? St Lawrence Jewry, Tillotson’s burial place and the church where he delivered the sermon in question, was not far from where Defoe was living, in Freeman’s Yard, Cornhill; Defoe was in London in part of 1684, if we accept the evidence of his marriage in the church of St. Botolph-without-Aldgate on 1 January that year. At this stage of his life he was setting up as a merchant, aiming to become a hosier in the City of London. We know he was interested in sermons, from his *Meditations* on the sermons of John Collins, written in 1681. Collins, says Backscheider, was “one of the original Pinner’s Hall lecturers”, where Tillotson also preached.<sup>115</sup> Certainly Tillotson, primate from 1691 till his death in 1694, was regarded as a “Latitudinarian” and his appointment as Archbishop was highly controversial. Craig Rose refers to him as a “one time presbyterian”, for which reason he was hated by the “Tories” and for his connection with the “comprehension” of Dissenters into the Church of England.<sup>116</sup> Defoe does mention Tillotson in his 1704 pamphlet, *Royal Religion*.<sup>117</sup> This work is a panegyric to William III, “that

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<sup>112</sup> Backscheider, pp. 70-1.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.71.

<sup>114</sup> Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.86.

<sup>115</sup> Backscheider, p.29.

<sup>116</sup> Rose, pp. 34, 183. According to Rose, Tillotson “had attended the Savoy Conference of 1661 on liturgical reform as a member [...] of the Presbyterian delegation”, Rose, p.183.

<sup>117</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Royal Religion* (London, 1704).

excellent Prince”, emphasising his religious nature.<sup>118</sup> Defoe cites as witnesses to William’s devotions, the Bishop of Norwich, who would have been John Moore, and Tillotson, twice. He says, “I appeal to the testimony given by the Late L.A: B. [Lord Archbishop] of Canterbury; which Testimony, as I have had the Honour to hear him Express, so there are many Living Witnesses of it”.<sup>119</sup> Despite Tillotson’s background, which would have chimed with Defoe, this must remain conjectural; although Defoe says he heard Tillotson’s “Testimony” regarding William’s piety, we have no evidence as to whether or not Defoe heard Tillotson preach.

Nevertheless, a question remains to be answered. If Defoe’s position in this work resembles Tillotson’s and if Tillotson is described as a “Latitudinarian”, does this make Defoe a Latitudinarian? In a significant difference between the two writers, Tillotson argues that the “rewards and punishments” of the after-life will be according to behaviour here, whereas Defoe, through the small child who opens the first work, emphasises the doctrine of the “elect”, whereby only those who are “chosen” are “saved” (I. 59-60).<sup>120</sup> This doctrine is usually associated with the Calvinist form of religion, and it shows Defoe’s Nonconformist origins, even though in his Introduction P.N. Furbank contends that seeing Defoe as a Calvinist is questionable and that here is “almost the only occasion in his writings where he states this doctrine” (I. 20). Nonetheless, it marks Defoe out from Tillotson. Perhaps Defoe is more orthodox in this work than elsewhere, since he is advocating a specific practice and therefore not surprisingly falls back on the religion of his childhood; this is, after all, what he knows best, the Presbyterianism in which he was brought up and became a Protestant Dissenter.

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>120</sup> Tillotson, I. p. 491.

In conclusion, what we have learnt from a detailed examination of the way religion is treated by Defoe in *The Family Instructor* is that, religion was prevalent during the time when Defoe was writing. It was, as it were, the lens through which people constructed reality. Therefore, a major topic of *The Family Instructor* would have been relevant to contemporary readers. Evidence for this can be seen in the number of editions of the work which were published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Secondly, religion had a political dimension. Ever since Henry VIII broke from Rome to establish a Protestant dynasty, the nature of the national religion was at issue. Thus, in writing *The Family Instructor* Defoe would have been aware of its political implications. By insisting that the work is applicable both to members of the Church of England and Dissenting Protestants it could be said that he aimed to cut through their political differences and emphasise the extent to which their beliefs were shared.

Finally, Defoe's own position was complex. The exact nature of his Dissent, though often assumed, is never actually established. A reading of his late works suggests that he had moved from being a young Protestant zealot to a man of greater tolerance. Nevertheless, despite this tolerance, even ecumenism, which brought him at times close to the Latitudinarian position, he was always identified with the Dissenting tradition in which he grew up. In *The Family Instructor*, though achieving in literary terms much that was original, in terms of his religion, his "Puritan" background predominates.

## Chapter Four

### **The Structure and Style of *The Family Instructor***

Maximillian E. Novak suggests that in *The Family Instructor* Defoe is consciously experimenting with “a variety of forms”.<sup>1</sup> Chapter Two looked at contemporary and traditional ideas of family and discussed how Defoe portrayed his fictitious family in the work in question. Chapter Three concentrated on religion and examined Defoe’s claim that the work was directed to both Dissenters and members of the Church of England. This chapter focuses on the structure and style of *The Family Instructor*<sup>2</sup> to argue that it is best viewed as an experiment in genre.

This chapter deals with the conduct book genre, since, traditionally, this is how *The Family Instructor* has been categorised. The general editors of the Pickering & Chatto edition of the Complete Works of Daniel Defoe, P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens place *The Family Instructor* with Defoe’s other “conduct books”, such as *Religious Courtship*, *Conjugal Lewdness* and *The Complete English Tradesman* in the ten volumes of his *Religious and Didactic Writings*. However, it is imperative to take account of the significant differences between such works and *The Family Instructor* as these are the features which make Defoe’s text so distinctive. This chapter looks at dialogue, since Defoe writes in this form, and at his use of reported speech. I also consider the relationship between this work and Defoe’s later “fiction”, with particular reference to *Robinson Crusoe*.

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<sup>1</sup> Novak, *Companion*, pp. 41-71.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor* Volume I (London, 1715) and Volume II (London, 1718); Daniel Defoe, *Religious and Didactic Works of Daniel Defoe*, gen eds W.R. Owens and P.N. Furbank, 10 vols, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), I and II, ed. P.N. Furbank. All references are to this latter edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

Several general points need to be made at the outset. First, *The Family Instructor* rests on a shared framework of belief. Defoe was writing for readers who all believed in God, and, despite his claim that he was writing for Anglicans and Dissenters, I have argued in Chapter Three that in fact his Puritanism was over-arching and that this group was primarily his target audience. Secondly, Defoe was very much present in his work, seeking to control the response of his readers at the outset. Recognition of this key aspect of *The Family Instructor* leads on to an examination of the work in the light of the “reader response” theory. Lastly, since he sought to make his work “realistic”, it will be necessary to offer some account of Defoe’s realism, particularly in the light of Ian Watt’s remarks in *The Rise of the Novel*.<sup>3</sup>

For the Greeks there were three broad classes of work, or genres, according to the speaking person. The Lyric or Poetic, Narrative, in which the speaker speaks, but allows others to do so; and Drama, in which the narrator does not speak at all. To these we must add the Novel. When we, as readers, think about genre we have certain expectations. For instance, our expectations of a detective novel and of a poem are quite different. The first involves a story in which the author may remain hidden, but crucially dictates the outcome of the narrative. He or she may reveal “clues” from time to time, allowing the reader to work out the solution to what is presented as a narrative puzzle. On the other hand, we expect a poem to be much shorter than a detective novel, or indeed any novel. It will have, probably, a greater concentration of language and will rely more heavily on figures of speech. Of the conduct book we expect to be told how to behave, what to do in given circumstances. In the religious conduct book we expect to be told how to behave religiously. But, whenever we attempt to

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<sup>3</sup> Watt, *Rise*, pp. 9-35.

categorise *The Family Instructor*, we quickly encounter problems. This is partly because modern critics tend to regard genres as being mutually exclusive, whereas when Defoe was writing, this was not the case. *The Family Instructor* illustrates the instability, perhaps the fluidity, of genre and raises awkward questions about it. Aware of this difficulty, Frank Bastian refers to “the ill-defined frontier which divides Defoe’s fiction from his other writings”.<sup>4</sup> Other writers on genre agree that the term is unstable. David Duff asserts that “in modern literary theory, few concepts have proved more problematic and unstable than that of genre”.<sup>5</sup> He asks whether genres are “autonomous entities” or “culturally constructed categories”.<sup>6</sup> John Frow defines genre as “a universal dimension of textuality”.<sup>7</sup> Frow argues that genres are differentiated by their content and that genre is “central to human meaning-making”.<sup>8</sup> Both writers agree that genres change all the time, with new ones replacing old. For E.D. Hirsch genre can be “a shared type that constitutes and determines meanings, since the implications of an utterance could not be conveyed if the genre were not a shared type”. Hirsch also argues that “All valid interpretation of every sort is founded on the re-cognition of what an author meant”.<sup>9</sup> Given this uncertainty about genre, it is nevertheless significant that *The Family Instructor* is generally accepted as a conduct book and that it is so designated by Furbank and Owens.

What are the implications of this categorisation? It forces the reader to examine this genre, which is carried out below. It also raises the issue of how Furbank and Owens have arrived at their groupings of Defoe’s complete works. Clearly *The Family Instructor* could not be

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<sup>4</sup> Frank Bastian, *Defoe’s Early Life* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Modern Genre Theory*, ed. David Duff (London and New York: Longman and Pearson Education, 1999), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> John Frow, *Genre* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> E.D. Hirsch, Jr. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 103, 126.

included in Defoe's *Political and Economic Works*, their first group, nor is it a writing on *Travel, Discovery or History*. Despite Defoe's evident novelistic approach in *The Family Instructor*, it could not be categorised among his ten *Novels*. The only other possible group is the one entitled *Satire, Fantasy and the Supernatural*. Certainly it deals with religion, but then so does the volume entitled *Dissent*, which is Volume Three of the group published as *Political and Economic Works*, whereas, *The Poor Man's Plea* and *The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd* surely political works, are included as Volume Six of the *Religious and Didactic Works*. *Serious Reflections* is placed among Defoe's *Novels*, despite the fact that George Starr, the editor, links this work with "works of the late 1720s" such as *The Political History of the Devil* (1726), *A System of Magick* (1726), *An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions* (1727) and *A New Family Instructor* (1727), all of which are published by Pickering & Chatto in the group entitled *Satire, Fantasy and Writings on the Supernatural*, except the last, which is included as Volume Three of Defoe's *Religious and Didactic Works*. Further, *The Commentator*, the newspaper Defoe is thought to have published between January and September 1720, is Volume 9 of his *Religious and Didactic Works*. This might be taken to be satirical and is certainly political.

What are we to conclude? First, it seems that Furbank and Owens' categories are to some extent arbitrary and are driven by the need to make Defoe's vast *oeuvre* manageable. The grouping of the works, except the novels, into seven or eight volumes suggests this.

Secondly, their placing *The Family Instructor* among the "conduct books" suggests they think it closest to this genre and certainly its content places it in the tradition of conduct books. Whilst this fact can be demonstrated by Defoe's evident belief in authority, by his acceptance of the religious status quo and by his somewhat old fashioned view of the family, some features of the work do not conform to this genre.

Conduct books are thought to have had their origin in the courtesy literature found across Europe during the Middle Ages. In England, key texts from abroad were translated in the sixteenth century. Most influential were Della Casa's *Galateo*, translated by Robert Peterson in 1576 and Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, translated by Thomas Hoby as *The Courtyer*, in 1561. These were directed mainly at the upper classes, outlining behaviour expected at court.<sup>10</sup> P.N. Furbank, the editor of the Pickering & Chatto edition of *The Family Instructor*, defines the work as "a religious conduct book" (I. 20) and its content places the work in the tradition of religious conduct literature, which was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Often, conduct books were written for readers who wanted to be accepted in a social or religious context from which they perceived themselves to be excluded. These are texts which enable the readers to construct an identity for themselves by learning particular, specified behaviour which is considered appropriate in particular, specified circumstances. This may suggest a degree of social mobility or a sense that existing structures are endangered, so that readers need to be reminded how they should behave; thus, to allow social mobility or to keep people in their place. In either instance, conduct books could be regarded as conservative in character rather than radical, promoting rather than challenging the status quo. This also typifies *The Family Instructor*. Indeed, in *The Family Instructor* Defoe seems to be aiming to return to the values of a previous age and to re-instate former, and lapsed, religious practice.

Conduct books are similar in theme, form and attitude. For example, *The Whole Duty of Man* has many similarities with *The Family Instructor*. Most conduct books agree that religious teaching is best begun early. Writing in 1673 Obadiah Walker emphasises that "the first Duty

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<sup>10</sup> Sylvia Kasey Marks, *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses), p. 35.

of Parents therefore is to *begin betimes*".<sup>11</sup> Richard Allestree, writing in the same year, considers the significant role of the mother in providing spiritual care, which will be most successful "the sooner it is set upon".<sup>12</sup> In *The Whole Duty of Man*, the author emphasises the same point, since children "(like *new vessels*) do usually keep the savour of that which is first put into them".<sup>13</sup> John Mortimer emphasises the fact that family prayer is easier when the habit is established in youth.<sup>14</sup> Conduct books also emphasise the need to moderate the passions, promoting the supremacy of reason. Allestree stresses that "correction" must be moderate and "not given in a rage" so that this emphasises the fault, not the parent's anger.<sup>15</sup> Conduct books share an obsession with order, and the conviction that the moral and religious order in this world reflects the heavenly order. Richard Baxter sees the family as a microcosm of the world. Families are the "chief seminaries of Christ's church on Earth, and it is very much that lyeth upon them to keep up the interest of Religion in the world".<sup>16</sup> Writers of conduct books therefore have a tendency to use biblical references to frighten their readers into behaving in a given way on earth to ensure the benefits of life after death. Josiah Woodward refers his readers to the book of Jeremiah, whose words, he argues, are "very dreadful".<sup>17</sup> In terms of their standpoint, writers of conduct books tend to be reactionary, looking back to a former "golden" age, which probably never existed outside their imagination. Thus they see the contemporary world as disintegrating (Allestree refers to "this prophane Age of ours") especially through the onset of "atheism" and, like every older generation, emphasises the waywardness of youth.<sup>18</sup> In *The Whole Duty of Man*, Allestree castigates "the youth of our age who [...] are advanced to the despising the counsel, yea

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<sup>11</sup> Obadiah Walker, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen* (Oxford, 1673), p. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Allestree (attrib.), *The Ladies' Calling* (Oxford, 1673), II, p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> Allestree, *Duty*, p. 296.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296; John Mortimer, *Advice to Parents* (London, 1704), p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Allestree, *Duty*, p. 299.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Poor Man's Family Book* (London, 1675), pp. 288-91.

<sup>17</sup> Josiah Woodward (attrib.), *The Necessary Duty of Family Prayer* (London, 1675), p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Allestree (attrib.), *The Ladies' Calling* (Oxford, 1673), I, p. 87.

mocking the persons of their parents”.<sup>19</sup> All stress the importance of example, to be set by those in authority if they wish to be followed effectively. For instance, Allestree emphasises the need for the parent to “give [the child] a pattern in his own practice”.<sup>20</sup> Obedience is similarly stressed, of the child towards parents, the wife towards the husband and all of them towards God, reflecting a family structure which, as we have seen in Chapter 2, was, by the time Defoe was writing, fast disappearing into the past. Early in his text Allestree notes the importance of non-resistance to the monarch. Later, he emphasises obedience to “Ministers of the Word”; obedience is mentioned in every section.<sup>21</sup> If one were to read only this type of literature, one would remain ignorant of the significance of the “new” sciences, with their emphasis on empiricism, of the emerging debate about the education of women, of any literary developments such as the imminence of the “novel”, and of the rise of capitalism.

The minimum requirement of early behavioural literature was literacy, which meant that initially conduct books would have been read by the nobility and gentry who had access to the learning which made them literate. David Cressy, the authority on Tudor and Stuart literacy, has written that,

every study demonstrates that literacy in pre-industrial England was closely and consistently associated with social and economic positions [...]. The gentle, clerical and professional classes, of course, had full possession of literacy, except for a few who were decrepit or dyslexic. Members of this dominant class, who comprised no more than 5 per cent of the population, were the primary audience for most of the output of the press.

Literacy was an attribute of their status and an active element in their lives. Here, and here only, was the seventeenth-century cultivated elite. And among their wives and

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<sup>19</sup> Allestree, *Duty*, p. 287.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

daughters were the principal female participants in literate culture, a minority within a minority.<sup>22</sup>

In 1937 Gertrude Noyes published a bibliography of over four hundred seventeenth-century conduct books, in which she identified a number of types, both secular and religious.<sup>23</sup> “Courtesy books”, Noyes argues, derive from the Italian idea of nobility and as the notion of gentility by birth becomes unsustainable, such guidance becomes secular (p.3). “If it is not birth that makes a gentleman, it must be education” (p.3). Many conduct books were translations from the French or Italian, particularly in the seventeenth century. Whilst many manuals offer advice on “gentlemanly” accomplishments such as the use of weaponry, horsemanship and hunting, the scope of guidance includes “discourses on love and marriage, on wisdom, beauty, temperance, patience and sobriety” (pp.9-10). They also include guidance on household management, on male, and especially female, decorum and on appropriate behaviour as an indicator of social class, as well as those devoted to Christian practice. In her index Noyes groups seventeenth-century conduct books according to the frequency of type or topic. Forty-one entries are described as “moralistic” (p.108), thirteen are dialogues, including two plays, (p.106), and a small number are sermons. The largest number, sixty-two, are aimed at women (p.111). This emphasis on women as readers is also reflected in the more recent collection of conduct books published by Pickering and Chatto.<sup>24</sup> Parts I to IV cover the period from 1500 to 1830 in thirty volumes. Overall, the conduct book constitutes a broad and historically enduring genre.

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<sup>22</sup> David Cressy, “Literacy in context: meaning and measurement in early modern England”, in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, eds John Brewer and Roy Porter (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 315.

<sup>23</sup> Gertrude E. Noyes, *Bibliography of Courtesy and Conduct Books in Seventeenth-century England* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1937). All references are to this edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

<sup>24</sup> *Conduct Literature for Women*, eds William St.Clair and Irmgaard Massen, 6 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000-2004).

Noyes asserts that in the eighteenth century the “quantity of works written” which discuss the arguments for and against gentility “indicate a high level of interest” (p.3). In *The Crisis of Courtesy*, however, the editor, Jacques Carré, examines the decline in courtesy books, suggesting that this was the result of “the dissemination of [their] subject matter into a broad range of literary genres, pre-eminently, the novel”.<sup>25</sup> He explains the decline in terms of changing social patterns, arguing that the gradual loss of aristocratic ideals gave way before the growth of the bourgeoisie. It became less acceptable to look to France and Italy for models of behaviour, especially for the rising urban “middling sort”. He also cites a growth in literacy, arguing that, as a result, more conduct books were aimed at the lower classes. The main period of change he sees as the period between about 1660 and 1750, as he terms it, “the Augustan age”, with its emphasis on “authority”, especially that of parents. As an example he cites George Savile, Marquis of Halifax’s celebrated work, *The Ladies’ New Year Gift; or, Advice to a Daughter as to Religion, Husband, House, Family and Children* (1688).<sup>26</sup> Over the course of the eighteenth century, courtesy books seem to turn into works of guidance on etiquette. In 1778, for instance, in *Evelina*, Frances Burney relies heavily on this tradition. Her heroine is unable to read the signs of appropriate social behaviour, or to have them de-coded for her, and is therefore excluded from “polite” society.<sup>27</sup> The theme of etiquette continued in the nineteenth century with the works of Isabella Beeton.<sup>28</sup> By this time “etiquette” was becoming newly important, being linked with the nineteenth century rise of

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<sup>25</sup> *The Crisis of Courtesy: Studies in the Conduct Book in Britain, 1600-1900*, ed. Jacques Carré (Leiden, New York, Köln: E.J. Brill, 1994), p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Frances Burney, *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady’s Entrance into the World* ed. Edward A. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Isabella Beeton (1836-65). She married Samuel Beeton in 1856 and was universally known as “Mrs Beeton” <<http://www.victorianweb.org>> [accessed 20.06.2014] and <<http://epsomandewellhistoryexplorer.org.uk/html>> [accessed 20.06.2014].

the middle classes.<sup>29</sup> Mrs Beeton's work was still being up-dated and sold in the twentieth century. Her "Book of Household Management" reflects the move from an emphasis on the obedience of women to their role as homemakers. This work, originally published in twenty-four monthly parts between 1859 and 1861, took her four years to write, as she confirms in the preface to the first bound edition. The edition published in 1960 contains advice on all aspects of home management.<sup>30</sup> Regarding the employment of "staff" it acknowledges that "Few homes today boast of a large staff [...]. The very fact that servants are not now often employed as a matter of course [...] means that the duties of domestic staff are often much less rigidly defined than they were". The section entitled "Etiquette" contains references to "Giving a Party" and "Meeting Royalty", as well as to "The London Season". Conduct books continued in the writings of Hannah More and later of Harriet Martineau.<sup>31</sup> More's "most ambitious conduct book" was *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess*. Martineau was famous for, among other publications, her "*Household Education*". Jennie Batchelor contends that conduct books have been "recently re-branded in the self-help manual".<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, Pat Rogers sees *Robinson Crusoe* as "a variant of the conduct book," dealing with "filial obedience, the conversion of heathens, the uses of solitude".<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (London: Routledge, 2002); Dror Wahman, *Imagining the Middle Class: the Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> Isabella Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Cookery and Household Management*, 9<sup>th</sup> impression 1969 (London and Melbourne: Ward, Lock and Co. Limited), pp. 85, 111.

<sup>31</sup> Hannah More (1745-1833), is described on "The Victorian Web" as an "Evangelical philanthropist" and this website goes on to point out that "she brought together her two roles, loyalist politics and concern for the labouring poor, in *The Cheap Repository Tracts* [...] moralistic yet vividly written, published between 1795 and 1797". An influential writer, she was a role model for many contemporary women. *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess* (London, 1805), is also hers; Harriet Martineau, (1802-1876). "The Victorian Web" contends that she was "one of the most outstanding intellectuals and political writers, who made a significant contribution [to the debates on] the condition of England [and] the Woman Question". *Household Education* (London, 1849) <<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/bio/html>> [accessed 23.03.2009 and 20.06.2014].

<sup>32</sup> Batchelor, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Pat Rogers, *Robinson Crusoe*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1979), p. 76.

Although Noyes does not distinguish between courtesy and conduct books, it makes sense to separate the two, since, as we have seen, they are designed for different purposes. John Mason similarly draws a distinction between courtesy and conduct books. Whilst acknowledging difficulties of definition, he asserts that courtesy literature is early pre-occupied with “the basis upon which the aristocrat may be properly differentiated from the plebeian” before going on to argue that “the difference lies not in the subjects considered, or the method of treatment, but rather in the point of view”.<sup>34</sup> In general “[...] a courtesy book is a work which discusses the types of human conduct as an expression of class ideals rather than as a subject for metaphysical speculation”.<sup>35</sup> It may be that in an age of social extremes which was very critical of social mores, which were seen to be in need of reform, behavioural literature expressed an ideal, reminding people of the standard they were trying to achieve.

Gertrude Noyes demonstrates that conduct books reflected the “seventeenth century pre-occupation with religion”, citing *The Whole Duty of Man* as an example.<sup>36</sup> This work is divided into seventeen chapters, one to be read each consecutive Sunday, then repeated twice more for a full year’s guidance. It covers the same issues as Defoe’s work as it includes the duties of parents to children and vice versa, the mutual obligations of husbands and wives and the responsibilities of masters and servants. *The Whole Duty of Man* is particularly significant in relation to *The Family Instructor*, since it is one of the books placed by the first mother in her elder daughter’s closet, replacing her playtexts and other works, thought to be equally profane (I. 327). Of *The Whole Duty of Man* there were approximately fifty “editions” between 1659 and 1889, including two in 1714 and one in 1715, the same year as the publication of the first part of *The Family Instructor*. Defoe would undoubtedly have been

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<sup>34</sup> John E. Mason, *Gentlefolk in the Making: studies in the history of English courtesy literature and related topics from 1531 to 1774* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>36</sup> Noyes, p. 4; Allestree, *Duty*.

familiar with it and it is reasonable to assume that his readers would have known it too.<sup>37</sup> The other work the mother leaves for her daughter was Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety*. Bayly was Bishop of Bangor, in Wales, and his work was as popular as that attributed to Allestree. If further proof of the popularity of the genre were needed it can be demonstrated by Arthur Dent's *The Plain man's Pathway to Heaven*, which first appeared in about 1612. By 1702 there were thirty-five editions of Dent's book and a seventieth in 1842.<sup>38</sup> Some religious conduct books were aimed at promoting the practice of religion in the home. Richard Baxter's *The Poor Man's Family Book*, published in 1675, is an example. In the preface Baxter acknowledged that he had been impressed by Dent's work and claimed that his own was "somewhat like it to the same Ends".<sup>39</sup> Other seventeenth-century conduct books concentrate on the religious upbringing of children, for example, Timothy Cruso's *Necessity and Advantage of an Early Victory over Satan* (1693) and *God the Guide of Youth* (1665). Francis Osborn's *Advice to a Son* appeared in 1658. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the religious conduct book was claimed by Christians of various persuasions. Arthur Dent, Lewis Bayly and Richard Baxter were all writing in the Puritan tradition, but Edmund Gibson, who published *Family-Devotion* in 1705, was an Anglican

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<sup>37</sup> *The Whole Duty of Man* was an immensely popular work; in *The Rivals* Lydia Languish quotes from it (Act I, Scene 2) as do Richardson in *Pamela* and Fielding in his burlesque, *Shamela* (Richard B. Sheridan, *The Rivals*, ed. L. Gibbs (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1963); Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*; or, *Virtue Rewarded*, eds Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 476; Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews and Shamela*, ed. Douglas Brooks-Davies, rev. and introd. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 332. C.J. Sommerville, however, warns that, whilst it was certainly a popular work, quoted in a number of other texts, a reference to this many "editions" is suspect. He states, "Whilst the estimate of popularity was based on the number of editions traced for each book, it cannot be assumed that editions were correctly numbered. Pirated editions, for example, might repeat the number of a legitimate edition. Or the number might be inflated for promotional reasons, on a new page which only disguised a re-issue of older sheets." (C.J. Sommerville, *Popular Religion in Restoration England* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1977), p. 12. Clearly, however, Sommerville got his information from Defoe himself, who was exaggerating in order to draw attention to pirated editions. It is worth noting that Defoe's most "popular" work, *The True-born Englishman*, "is reported to have sold 80,000 copies in perhaps 21 editions" (ibid., p. 10).

<sup>38</sup> *The Plain man's Pathway to Heaven* was translated into French, German, Italian, Dutch, Welsh, and into several middle-European languages; in 1685 an edition appeared in a language of the native American people, "printed for the right honorable (sic) Corporation in London for the gospelizing the Indins (sic) in New England, 1685" (Cambridge, MA: 1685). But C.J. Sommerville's warning about "editions" should of course be taken into account.

<sup>39</sup> Baxter, Unpaginated preface.

bishop. John Mortimer, best known for his work on agriculture, was also Anglican, although his *Advice to Parents*, published in 1704, whilst emphasising the values of Christianity, begins from the perspective of the virtues of pre-Christian antiquity. William Darrell, author of *The Gentleman Instructed in the conduct of a virtuous and happy life*, which also appeared in 1704, was a Jesuit.

By the time Defoe wrote *The Family Instructor*, courtesy books and their courtly origins were long gone. Notably, there is a similarity between this work and conduct books in terms of content. They all cover the same ground. For example, his stress on the importance of beginning the practice of family worship, and through it religious instruction, whilst children are young is recognised by many authors of conduct books. Writing in 1673, Obadiah Walker emphasises that “the first Duty of Parents is to *begin betimes*.”<sup>40</sup> Through the first father in *The Family Instructor* Defoe expresses the same sentiment. The father is concerned about the effect of his new-formed religious practice in the family on his two elder children, “after their green and tender Years are past, in which they are moulded *like Wax to a Seal*” (I. 68). In Volume II, Sir Richard exclaims, “How happy are they [...] who [...] begin this Work betimes” (II. 118). It is interesting that Defoe uses Walker’s own phrase. Perhaps this indicates that Defoe had read this same work? Although we cannot know for certain, Defoe is likely to have been familiar with conduct books.

The theme of obedience is also central to conduct books. In *The Whole Duty of Man*, for example, Allestree emphasises obedience, throughout, and especially on the second Sunday.<sup>41</sup> Defoe’s work demonstrates this too; it is as much about authority as religion. In Part II of Volume I, for instance, Defoe makes it clear that the Master of apprentices has the duties of a

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<sup>40</sup> Obadiah Walker, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen* (Oxford, 1673), p. 18.

<sup>41</sup> Allestree, *Duty, Sunday II*.

father. Since he is *in loco parentis* it is his responsibility to bring up his apprentices to follow a religious regimen. His relationship with his apprentices relies for its effectiveness on the earlier family model. Following the fifth commandment, the key feature is obedience, especially of children to their parents. Throughout the first and third parts of the first volume of *The Family Instructor* Defoe's main theme is filial obedience. Once he has described how the first father, at the beginning of Volume I, has been awakened by his youngest son to the need to instigate family religion and has persuaded his wife to share his opinion, Defoe turns the focus on to the two elder children, George and Mary, and their unwillingness to do their parents' will. This is expressed as a contrast between the attitudes and behaviour of the younger and the elder daughter and son. The younger daughter, Betty, having described her mother's requirements as "so rational", stresses the importance of children obeying their parents (I. 105). To Mary Betty remarks, "I am ashamed to hear you talk so *of my Mother, Sister*; sure you ha'n't lost your *Manners, and Duty*, as well as *Respect*" (I. 106). The young people cannot conform, however, and their story is taken up after that of the apprentices, as Part III. The elder daughter is allowed to go to live with her aunt and ultimately marries "a sober, religious Gentleman" (I. 160). The son is unrepentant, however. As Defoe summarises at the end of Part one of Volume I, he "travels without his Father's consent, spends his Estate, gets a Commission in the Army, is disbanded, comes Home a Cripple and a Beggar; and tho' always very penitent for rejecting his Father's Government and Instruction, yet never submits himself to his Father, so as to be receive'd again, and dies miserable" (I. 160).

Volume II of *The Family Instructor* explores the significance of the obedience of wives to their husbands and later gives examples of obedient servants. The first two husbands both have recalcitrant wives, but, whereas the first husband is overcome by his wife's arguments and gives up his "Duty" to introduce family worship, the second continues to do so. "What

can I do,” *says* [the first husband], “when a Woman is arriv’d to such a height as to make a Mock of me in my own Family?” (II. 7). Once the family worship is “lay’d aside”, however, Defoe maintains, “their Family Peace vanish’d” (II. 9). He gives examples of their dispute. As seen later, they argue about the eclipse, for instance. The husband maintains that “the Moon was like a cross Wife, that when she was out of Humour, could Thwart and Eclipse her Husband whenever she pleased; and that if an ill Wife stood in the Way, the brightest Husband could not shine” (II. 9). The modern reader has difficulty with the idea of the husband’s automatic precedence. This is the traditional standpoint, however, and it is Defoe’s position. This point of view is maintained throughout *The Family Instructor*. All the wives who challenge their husbands ultimately go mad or fall ill. We think back to Volume I, for example, when the teenager who initially defied her parents marries the man at her Aunt’s. This is her response to her husband.

As soon as this Prayer was over, she turn’d herself towards him, *and reaching out her Hands to him*, she embrac’d him with great Passion and Earnestness, as her Strength would permit; *my Dear*, said she, I bless GOD, for what he has put into thy Heart to say upon that Subject; I am convinc’d I have sinned greatly in that matter of my Father; *I am convinc’d, I am convinc’d*, repeating the Words several Times with very great Earnestness, and Abundance of Tears. (I. 301)

In Volume II, the first wife is eventually “ill”. “A deep Melancholy seemed to succeed the Fever” and she later loses her mind; she is “depriv’d of the Use of Reason” (II. 53, 55). The maid, Betty, describes her mistress as being “*stark mad; your Master is come a purpose to her, and she won’t be spoke with*” (II. 97). Sir Richard confirms this diagnosis:

Why truly, Sister, if such a Cause should come before us at the Quarter-Session; I must own that as there is no law to punish bad Wives, and such a Case as yours is was scarce ever heard before, I should certainly move my Brother Justices to Vote her Lunatick, and commit the Woman to *Bedlam*. (II. 74)

Sir Richard strikes the modern reader as an unreconstructed male chauvinist. Aside from the outburst above, he accuses his sister of “Atheism” more than once, and says to her, “I have heard that Women have no Souls” (II. 77). It is interesting that though he himself admits to being “the very same *drunken, loose, profane DEVIL* my Father was before me”, the Citizen can say to his Friend, “You gave a strange Account of his Discourse about Religion and his own Wickedness; I have a great Opinion that Gentleman will, some time or other, be a reform’d Man”. His Friend agrees. “Indeed so have I”, he replies (II. 62, 65). Ultimately, of course, Sir Richard does become an exemplar of religion. The concentration on the male point of view, however, typifies the conduct book and also this whole work. Women are generally reconcilers, like the daughter of the rash father. “*Here she gives her Father an Account of the Discourse she had with her Brother, except only those Passages which mention’d the Passion of his Father, and cursing him*” (II. 178). All the men are portrayed as kind and generous to their wives. For instance, the husband of Sir Richard’s sister tells the maid to “go up to your Mistress, desire her not to be frightned. I am not come to give her any Disturbance” (II. 101). Indeed, it could be argued that *The Family Instructor* is a fore-runner of the sentimental novels of the later eighteenth century. The Citizen’s friend is “extremely affected with the Tragical part of [the story of] his Wife, which indeed brought Tears into his Eyes” (II. 55). Men are often in tears. Resuming the story of the “passionate”, rash father, the Neighbour tells his Friend of the younger son and his sister. “The good Man was touch’d with this Discourse, and it brought Tears into his Eyes” (II. 177). Defoe is obviously aware that he may be thought a misogynist. He forestalls the possible complaint from women in the Preface to Volume II and in the “Brief Notes on the foregoing three Dialogues” (II. 120-2). In the former he explains that his reason for recounting the “Story of Two very bad Wives” is that “The reproof is upon Husbands for omitting Family Worship” (II. 3). Later he uses

similar arguments. Nevertheless, he does seem to want to tell women how to behave, along with children and servants, as his response to the conduct book form implies.

A further example of the similarity in content between *The Family Instructor* and the traditional conduct book is in the portrayal of retainers; they are generally presented positively, unlike contemporary criticisms of servants. Volume II has a “nurse” who is concerned for her mistress. When she takes it upon herself to go to Sir Richard with his sister’s children, she says, “I hope it will be all over and well again” (II. 67). “Susan” attempts to help her mistress. She is “Honest *Susan*” and remains loyal, even after her dismissal. “So she came away, brought her Mistress home, carry’d her up Stairs in her Arms, for she was very Ill, and put her to Bed” (II. 106). Maids usually oppose other women and are supportive of men. For example “Mary”, the maid in the family of the “rash” father, after the younger son confirms the conduct book theme of the behaviour of the parent not excusing the conduct of the child, retorts, “I am glad to hear you talk so, Sir; I wish my Master heard you too” (II. 175). The same Master makes himself ill with grief and anger, but a “good, sober grave Woman, who was kept in the House to look after his Family persuaded him to go to Bed” and either sat up with him herself or got “*Mary*” to do so (II. 175). In the end, this “good Old Woman [...] *the pious Woman* [...] happily brought about a perfect Reconciliation, and they are now a very comfortable, pleasant, Family” (II. 179). But the main portrayal in Volume II is of “*Margy*”. Unlike the parents, this “poor Maid-Servant” can influence the youngest child for the good (II. 189). The cousin confirms to the Captain,

never fear it, Sir; I am perswaded the Work in the Child’s Heart is from GOD, and he will carry it on; [...] he that sent this poor honest Servant hither, will always find Tutors for One that he will have taught: Who ever lives to see that Child a Man, will I dare say see him such a Man as never was seen in such a Family. (II. 191)

The Captain asks to see Margy; although she reminds him “I am not [the child’s] Mother, Sir; my Business is to dress him and undress him, and to tend him Night and Day”, when the Captain pays her to teach the boy to read and give him a religious education, she acknowledges that “I think it is every Servant’s Duty to do what you say” (II. 193).

Ultimately, the Captain marries her himself. She becomes “the Captain’s Wife, formerly the Child’s Maid” (II. 228). Margy is “a Pattern to all Servants, nay, and Mistresses too, for the Conduct of Children” (II. 254). Defoe argues that this has been the purpose of this part of his work, “to instruct Servants in what is their Duty, when little Children come into their Hands, that they are to do more than Dress and Undress them” (II. 255). The same point is made on the title page, which promises “A great Variety of Cases relating to setting Ill Examples to Children and Servants”. Lewis Bayly had referred to the need for “Masters to set a *good example* to their servants”.<sup>42</sup> The importance of this is stressed early in *The Family Instructor*. In the first Volume, when the child misunderstands the purpose of going to church and criticises the worldliness of his mother, father and sisters, the author in parenthesis exclaims, “*O see here the Mischief of evil Examples in Parents!*” (I. 65). The message is carried on till the end of Volume II. A father declares, “I have given [my children] the most horrible Example of all Looseness, Irreligion, Drunkenness, and Prophaneness, and what is my Repentance to them?” The Lady assures him, “It is at least a good Example” (II. 225).

Other similarities in content between *The Family Instructor* and the traditional conduct book include the advice to moderate the “passions”, especially in the upbringing of children, which Defoe explores and illustrates extensively in Volume II. Although he seems to be clear that they were “bad” in themselves, he is not interested in defining the “passions”, nor in finding a ready-made definition. Nor was he pre-occupied with demonstrating the effects of a variety

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<sup>42</sup> Bayly, p. 195.

of passions. He was interested in one passion only and that in a very specific circumstance: the wrong-headedness of the punishment of boys by enraged fathers. The passions are generally considered to be weaknesses and any action taken under their influence is seen as flawed. Writers of conduct books are perhaps referring to the conflict between intellect and body; in Defoe's work "passion" usually means anger, for instance, in the dispute between the man and his wife as to which door they should use to go into the garden; the Friend tells the Citizen, "Well, sure never was Feud carry'd to such a Height between a Man and his Wife from so scandalous a beginning; in short we differed once to such a degree about nothing, but whether we should go into the Garden by the Hall Door or the Green-house Door, that it ended in a separation" (II. 59). Defoe's point here, as elsewhere, is that when once a person gives way to "passion", they lose control of themselves, let in "the Devil", and very often cannot repair the damage to their relationships. For instance, describing the wife who thinks she will poison her husband, he refers to "Her Passion, the Devil's best handle" (II. 102). "Passion" is usually in opposition to "Reason", for instance, when the Citizen castigates himself, "like a Fool I gave way to my Passions, without making use of my Reason" (II. 39.) Geoffrey Sill's work explores this theme.<sup>43</sup> Defoe explains himself in the example of the "passionate" father in Volume II. The passing neighbour asserts that "The Duty of Correcting a Child knows no passion". He tells this father that "Passion is but a kind of short Madness"; indeed, he argues, "Passion destroys the very Nature of Correction" (II. 129, 131).

Clearly, then, Defoe's work shares many of the features of the traditional conduct book. But there remain some odd things about *The Family Instructor*. Whilst it shares some of their preoccupations, others raise questions which cannot be adequately answered simply by

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<sup>43</sup> Geoffrey Sill, *The Cure of the Passions and the Origins of the English Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

denoting the work a religious conduct book. Despite its similarities to such works, *The Family Instructor* is significantly different in a number of ways. First, whilst religious conduct books such as Baxter's *The Poor Man's Family Book* and works such as those by Lewis Bayly and Arthur Dent are guidance manuals for the practice of religion in the home, in *The Family Instructor* Defoe explores the impact of *not* introducing such practice whilst children are young and malleable enough to accept it as the norm. This is a major theme. Defoe asserts that the father's failure to instruct his family in Part I is "one of the great Designs of this Work" and that there is "something of this running through the whole Course of the Work", not only through the first part (I. 68). Secondly, unlike other traditional conduct books, the whole cast of Defoe's work is not merely hortatory. It rather illustrates through "real" characters, and, as we shall see, the narrative urge ultimately predominates and leads Defoe towards his later "novels".

Despite the contemporary attitude towards the stage, which Defoe professes to share, as evidenced in this work, he argues that "*some have call'd [The Family Instructor] a Religious Play*" (I. 44). In the Preface to Volume II he explains his reasons for "bringing Two such bad Wives upon the Stage" (II.3). Later, the same metaphor recurs. In the endnote which covers the first three dialogues he stresses the importance of marital harmony and explains that his reason for "*bringing the Story of two Deficient Wives upon the Stage*" is to emphasise the number of men who blame their wives for their not introducing family worship themselves (II 121). He clearly likes this metaphor. He uses it elsewhere. For example, in *Religious Courtship* he refers to "the Persons whom I shall bring on the Stage in the course of

the Story”.<sup>44</sup> Also in *The New Family Instructor* he mentions “the Family I am to bring upon the Stage”.<sup>45</sup>

Defoe’s use of dialogue is also un-typical. A number of conduct books were written in dialogue, but their protagonists do not give the impression of “realism” in the way in which Defoe’s do. What is understood by “real” characters? Here we mean lifelike, copying life in their behaviour.<sup>46</sup> The children in Defoe’s work reflect the features of “real” people; they speak like actual children and behave with psychological veracity. Despite the distance of time we recognise the elder young people as similar to teenagers of today. The wives of Volume II are, likewise, recognisable married women. Ian Watt refers to the novel’s “formal realism”, which, in his view, typifies the novel as a genre. He defines “formal realism” as “the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms”.<sup>47</sup> In *The Family Instructor*, we take Defoe’s characters as exemplifying this quality, which he developed in all the long narratives which were to come. We see his characters as “real” in a novelistic way and want them to exemplify this realism. This is often achieved through lifelike dialogue. But compare such dialogue with that found in *The Poor Man’s Family Book*, one of the best known conduct books at the time. Richard Baxter’s work is expressed as a conversation between “Saul”, the sinner, and “Paul”,

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<sup>44</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Religious Courtship* (London, 1722), *Religious and Didactic Writings of Daniel Defoe*, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), IV, ed. G.A. Starr, p. 31.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A New Family Instructor* (London, 1727); *Religious and Didactic writings*, III, ed. W.R. Owens, p. 28.

<sup>46</sup> Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans Willard R. Trask (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003); Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961).

<sup>47</sup> Watt, *Rise*, p. 33.

the pastor. It opens with a colloquial tone, “Well, Neighbour, how do you like the new life you have begun?” Soon, however, Saul clearly becomes Paul’s “feed”, asking all the questions which produce the edifying answers which shape the text. The work continues as a somewhat stilted exchange, Saul playing straight into Paul’s hands, with a passive acceptance of the pastor’s position. Paul has most of the dialogue, which turns on statements and precepts such as “If God be not the master of your Family, the Devil will”.<sup>48</sup>

Defoe’s realism can have both a physical and a symbolic dimension, especially when we look at how he presents the domestic space in *The Family Instructor* and in *Robinson Crusoe*. If we consider the setting of *The Family Instructor* first, we can see that it takes place in houses with gardens. The garden is a space in which nature is controlled by humankind; beyond its walls lies chaos, uncertainty. Inside, is a safe domestic space, especially for women. When the eldest brother leaves home, the furthest his sister can get to is the home of her “aunt”, another domestic space (I. 244). The smallest boy, who sets the story in motion, is found by his father in the mental and physical wilderness of a “field, behind his Garden (I. 47). Sir Richard “some time after taking a walk in his garden” completes his conversion (II. 87-8). In both Volumes unacceptable events seem to take place outside the home. In Volume I, the elder young people first threaten their parents when they attempt to go to the park and later when they pretend they have gone there (I. 96, 112, 153-4). In Volume II similarly the Citizen tells his Friend, “My Servants and my other Children are let loose to the World” (II. 34); the Friend’s “Business” is in London (II. 37). The wife, Sir Richard’s sister, is away from home with her “She-Friend” at her elbow; clearly a bad influence (II. 94-5). The little boy’s “errand” is outside his home (II. 127); and there is also a boy who jumps out of the window to avoid his enraged father (II. 151). An elder son, who could not agree to marry the woman his father had chosen for him, “remov’d the next Day [...] from his Father’s House”

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<sup>48</sup> Richard Baxter, *The Poor Man’s Family Book* (London, 1675), pp. 287-8.

(II. 157). Finally, another exemplary father treats his children with excessive kindness; the youngest had a “Haunt among some ill Company” and “had stay’d out two Nights together” (II. 162).

In *Robinson Crusoe*, space assumes a symbolic dimension once Crusoe is on his island. Almost immediately, after spending his first night up a tree for safety, he seeks to re-create a domestic space in which he feels safe. As Pat Rogers noted, like others of his contemporaries, he has two homes, his “Castle” and his “Country retreat.”<sup>49</sup> To begin with, his Castle is heavily fortified (pp. 67, 79). Then he attempts to make all the artefacts he finds necessary for his daily life, starting with a table and chair; he sets out to impose civilization on his wild surroundings (pp. 68 et seq.). When he sees the footprint he returns, terrified, to his Castle and feels the need to defend it in case it is attacked by the cannibals (pp. 153-4, 182). Like the setting in both parts of *The Family Instructor* it is a “real” environment, but also a state of mind, a psychological condition.

Although described as a religious ‘conduct book’ *The Family Instructor* is not a religious tract. In the initiating discussion between the first father and his small son the emphasis is Calvinistic. In their first discussion of religion, the boy takes refuge in the fact that Jesus died for all; he says, “And now we are all sav’d again by this New Saviour’s Satisfaction, a’n’t we Father?” The father replies, “No Child, not all! We cannot say all are Saved, but all those who are Saved, are so Saved.” His son wants to know if he is “chosen”. The father explains. “Why Child, it may be presumptively known by this, That since to all that God has thus chosen, he by his Spirit gives Faith and Repentance, Sanctification in Heart, and Justification of Person: Whoever the Spirit of God worketh this Faith and Repentance in, have a very good

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<sup>49</sup> Pat Rogers, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 86.

Assurance that they are in the Number” (I. 59-60). This however, does not of itself make *The Family Instructor* an attempt to present a particular religious position. Such an emphasis is rather a consequence of Defoe’s own upbringing, of the fact that his tradition was Puritan, so what he knew best in terms of religion. He makes it clear from his opening assertion that this work is applicable to Anglicans as well as Dissenters; we also find that the doctrine of “predestination” is article XVII of the thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican Church. Most importantly, although this father expounds the doctrine of “the elect” to his small son, who is worried about his own salvation as a result, no-one in the rest of this volume, or in Volume II, is troubled by the traditional Calvinist preoccupation as to whether or not they are one of “the elect”. What seem to interest Defoe are the minds of his characters and the narrative possibilities of their “stories”. For instance, the first father is wracked with guilt as a result of his awareness of his inadequacy in terms of the introduction of family worship. He is also (rightly, it turns out) worried about the reactions of his older children. In other words, the focus is on the first father’s feelings. Similarly, it is the emotional response of the children which is given emphasis.

As we have seen, the most lifelike feature of the characters in *The Family Instructor* is their use of dialogue, though unlike that of contemporary plays, such as Congreve’s *The Way of the World* (1700), the dialogue here has touches of colloquialism. For instance, the elder daughter, who “flew out in a passion” when her mother attempted to change her way of life, declares “she was past a Child, she would go to the Park, and to the Play, *and the like*, ay that she would”, reports Defoe (I. 95). Likewise, at the beginning of Part II, Will complains that the extent of “Religious doings” in the family to which he has been apprenticed, is “enough to weary a Body off their legs” (I. 165). Furthermore, the characters in the work live in solid houses, with rooms upstairs and down and gardens backing on to fields. When one of the

wives in Volume II shuts the door in her husband's face and injures him we have a very definite view of the house in which they live. The husband remarks on the blood visible "on the Stair-head", before the servant could attend him with a "Bason and Towel" (II. 21). Yet Defoe's characters in this work are not fully lifelike, only "real" enough to convince the reader at the moment of reading. They seem "realistic" because they speak like "real" people, but in fact we know little about them. What are their characters apart from in the given context? What do they look like? We do not even know their names until late in the work. This pre-supposes that an author should be able to present fully rounded characters. This may be true of later novelists, but when Defoe was writing this work his theme was uppermost in his mind, namely the necessity of introducing the practice of daily family prayer. At various points he claims that the work is based on "real" families and their troubles. For instance, of the first part of Volume I he states that much is "Historical, and the Family known" (I. 110). But nonetheless, the reader cannot help coming to the conclusion, on the basis of Defoe's limited use of "realism", that this is a fictional family, in fictional circumstances.

Perhaps because he is using his characters as exemplars and they are therefore homiletic and typical, Defoe denies them the basic individuality of a name. It is not until late in Part One of Volume I that we discover, when Defoe cannot avoid referring to him in the third person, that the smallest son is "Tommy" (I. 150). Similarly, we find out after one hundred pages or so, that the elder sister is Mary and the younger one, Betty. Unusually, the father in Volume I addresses his elder son directly, "Hold, George", though not immediately (I. 131). Defoe's use of names has been noted by many critics. Ian Watt points out that Defoe "very rarely gives names that are conventional or fanciful" and that he mostly uses ordinary names.<sup>50</sup> Noticeably, in this work, when Defoe does use names they tend to be those of retainers. For instance, in Volume I the elder teenager is "Mary", but this name is later given to a servant

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<sup>50</sup> Ian Watt, 'The Naming of Characters in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding', *Review of English Studies*, 25 (1929), 322-38.

(II. p.176). Similarly, the apprentice Thomas, has the same name as the opening family's coachman (I. 6, 165). The younger daughter of the first family is "Betty"; in the next volume she is a servant (II. 97). At times, the lack of names causes confusion. For instance, in the opening three dialogues of Volume II Defoe switches from "Citizen" to "Friend"; the Friend addresses the Citizen as "Friend" and once the dialogues start, they are both designated "husband".

A final example of the difference between *The Family Instructor* and the traditional conduct book is Defoe's use of "end notes". Whilst all conduct books seem to be didactic, none of their authors use end notes. Defoe's own use of them is inconsistent. He seems to begin by trying to control the reader's response to his work, but ends up allowing the dialogue to speak for itself.<sup>51</sup> For example, the "notes on the first dialogue" are over three and a half pages long and the focus is on the interpretation of the previous conversation between the first father and his small son. Defoe avers that his wish is to state the "plain general Principals of the Christians [sic] Religion" (I. 68). He stresses his ecumenism, his wish to reach all Protestant denominations. Later, however, he re-inforces the "messages" of the preceding dialogue (I. 71). The second dialogue stresses the significance of "natural religion" which, "join'd with revealed Religion", can bring a child to God despite the irreligious nature of his parents (I. 83). The theme of the notes to the third dialogue is the necessity of beginning religious teaching early, a commonplace of conduct literature, as we have seen, and parental duty is emphasised. Defoe also touches on the marital relationship, talking of the mutual support which an ideal marriage brings. There are no "notes" at the end of the third dialogue, merely

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<sup>51</sup> The whole question of the author's capacity to control the reader's response has continued to exercise authors until quite recently. Samuel Richardson, for instance, was so concerned that his (mainly female) readers should not misinterpret his presentation of Lovelace, that he resorted to explanatory footnotes. The twentieth-century aesthetic response theory tackled this question head-on.

an introduction to the fourth which emphasises, very briefly, the “folly and levity” of the older children especially, as a lead into the dialogue between the eldest daughter and her brother. This dialogue ends with a brief aside from the author to the effect that he will comment no further because of the family being “known” (I. 110). There is no end note at all. After the fifth dialogue there are two short paragraphs describing its significance (I. 122). After the sixth and seventh, Defoe offers one paragraph which moves the narrative forward. There is no direction as to how the reader should interpret what has happened, no separate “notes”. Indeed, these have now disappeared from Part I altogether. With Part II, which concerns the two apprentices, Will and Tom, the end notes re-appear. After the first dialogue comes one of the longest end notes – over four pages – which draws out the moral of the preceding conversation. In Volume II, the end notes are much reduced and sometimes are missing altogether. Defoe declares, for instance, that one end note is “on the foregoing three Dialogues” (II. 120). The notes become increasingly incorporated in the text of the work, in the form of reported speech and “story-telling”, or where Defoe points the moral of the tale within the story, such as in the passage which follows.

It may be easily believ'd, that while this Breach continued in religious Things, the Family Peace, as to common Affairs, went all to wreck; the Countenances of Husband and Wife were perfectly chang'd to one another; no Smiles, no pleasant Word, no kind Thing pass'd between them; but a Cloud of Melancholly and Discontent, and an Air of Estrangement spread it self over the whole Family; every little Dispute broke out into a Feud, every Feud was carried on to the extreamest height; and, in a word, there was very little room, if any, for the Poor remains of conjugal Affection to shew it self: So certain is it, that where religious Peace is broken, no other Peace can long continue. (II 51).

Given Defoe's wish to control the response of his readers in the end notes, how relevant is reader response theory? This is based on the idea that the reader plays a part in creating a work's meaning, focussing on the role of the reader, where most theories concentrate on the

writer. There are some subtleties in the working of this theory. For instance, Stanley Fish and Norman Holland focussed on the individual reader's experience. Others were more concerned to conduct psychological experiments and a third, and more influential, group considered individual responses sufficiently uniform as to be insignificant. To this latter group belong Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. Jauss defines a literary work as "not an object that stands by itself and that offers the same view to each reader in each period. It is much more like an orchestration that strikes ever new resonances among its readers and that frees the text from the material of the words and brings it to a contemporary existence".<sup>52</sup> He states, "The coherence of literature as an event is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary, and later, readers, critics and authors".<sup>53</sup> Has this approach anything to tell us about *The Family Instructor*? The first readers of this work would have had, as their "horizon of expectations", the conduct book. Clearly, despite Defoe's wishes, the modern reader identifies with his recalcitrant young people rather than with the first father, and with the wives rather than their husbands in Volume II. As P.N. Furbank pointed out, this can overbalance the work and destroy Defoe's purpose (I. 25, 35). However, Umberto Eco, in exploring the role of the reader, argues that "any text can be interpreted however the 'model reader' likes [...]. Those texts that obsessively aim at arousing a precise response on the part of more or less precise empirical readers [...] are in fact open to any possible 'aberrant' decoding".<sup>54</sup> He illustrates this by the examples of Superman comics and the novels of Ian Fleming, contending that "they can be read in various ways, each way being independent from the others".<sup>55</sup> But it applies equally to Defoe's work. Likewise, such a theory reinforces Pat Rogers' contention that there are many interpretations of Crusoe's island experience. He argues that it can be seen as exemplifying the "myth" of

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<sup>52</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans Timothy Bahti; intro. Paul de Man (Brighton: Harvester, 1982), p. 21.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> Umberto Eco *The Role of the Reader* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1979), p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

economic man (like Novak), as displaying Defoe's search for gentility (like Michael Shinagel), as an expression of capitalist drives (like Ian Watt) or as an example of Defoe's Puritanism (like George Starr and J. Paul Hunter).<sup>56</sup> Although one can guess what type of reader Defoe had in mind for *The Family Instructor*, as Eco contends, "The reader is strictly defined by the lexical and the syntactical organization of the text: the text is nothing else but the semantic-pragmatic production of its own Model Readers".<sup>57</sup> Thus the reader response theory can be useful in our interpretation of this work. Jauss's notion of the reader's "horizon of expectations" can be useful in explaining how contemporary readers might have responded to *The Family Instructor*; Eco's comments allow modern readers the validity of their own interpretation of this work.

A number of features of *The Family Instructor* point to Defoe's move towards the long prose narratives we now call the novels. First is his use of dialogue, which he clearly understood as a means of giving immediacy to his narrative. Maximillian Novak asserts that Defoe "could never have written, say, the seemingly effortless dialogue between William and the Dutch captive in Ceylon in *Captain Singleton* [...] without having mastered that form so thoroughly in his didactic writings".<sup>58</sup> David Lodge links this with an explanation of "showing" and "telling", arguing that the use of dialogue to develop the narrative and illustrate the "message" is a good example of "showing" since "the purest form of showing is the quoted speech of characters, in which language exactly mirrors the event".<sup>59</sup> By contrast, as we have seen, Defoe suggests his protagonists are real people by characterising speech rhythms and incorporating colloquialisms into his dialogue. John Richetti notes Defoe's "extraordinary

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<sup>56</sup> Rogers; Novak, *Economics*; Michael Shinagel, *Defoe and Middle Class Gentility* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968); Watt, *Rise*; George Starr, *Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965) Hunter, *Pilgrim*.

<sup>57</sup> Eco, p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Novak, *Defoe Companion*, p. 59; Richetti, *Crusoe*, p. 122.

<sup>59</sup> David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992), p. 122.

capacity” to [...] “ventriloquize”, his ability to “live” in the skin of others and project their thoughts and feelings.<sup>60</sup> Richetti’s comments are illustrated in the following dialogue between George, the “elder” brother, and his sister, Mary.

*Brother. Sister!* what in Tears! what’s the matter now?  
[*She cries on, but makes no Answer.*  
*Bro. Dear Sister!* Tell me your Grievance, *I say tell me*, what is it troubles you?  
[*And pulls her by her Cloaths.*  
*Sist. I won’t;* don’t trouble me, *I won’t tell you*, let me alone [*Sobs and cries still.*  
(I. 96).

In this small sample, two points are worth noting. First, Defoe does not agree with either of the speakers (an example of his “ventriloquizing” ability). Secondly, he uses delay to increase the tension. The reader knows that George will come to a sad end, but Defoe does not divulge this here.

The brother offers to read a play to his sister to cheer her up, whereupon she discovers her plays are missing, “Oh, Thieves! Thieves! I am robb’d!” she exclaims initially. Her brother then finds the plays have been replaced by “a Prayer-Book”, and two well-known conduct books, “the *Practice of Piety*” and “the *Whole Duty of Man*” (I. 97). Defoe here introduces a major theme of the work, through natural dialogue.

They are shortly joined by “the second brother” a little younger than they are; he and his sister, Betty, support their parents. Despite the younger brother’s conviction, already instilled by his father, George remains defiant.

*2 Bro. Hark!* You are call’d just now; you will be of another Mind when you come back, *I’ll warrant you* .  
[*The Eldest Son is call’d to come to his Father.*  
.].  
*1 Bro. Never as long as I live.* [goes out]  
(I. 98).

It is a threat which he maintains and it leads to the disastrous conflict with his father.

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<sup>60</sup> Richetti, *Crusoe*, p. xiii.

Here too Defoe “ventriloquizes” the voices of the young people. He also looks forward to the final outcome of the work, the death of George, and clearly disapproves of his attitude. A further example occurs in Volume II, with an argument between a husband and wife about the eclipse of the sun, which occurred on 22 April (Old Style) (II. 9). The liveliness of the dialogue apart, Defoe again presents a view other than his own and introduces an extraneous issue (here the eclipse) effortlessly into the work. Defoe asserts:

the Husband tells her, that the Moon was like a cross Wife, that when she was out of Humour, could Thwart and Eclipse her Husband whenever she pleased; and that if an ill Wife stood in the Way, the brightest Husband could not shine. She flew in a Passion at this, and being of a sharp Wit, you do well, *says she*, to carry your Emblem to a suitable height; *I warrant*, you think a Wife, like the Moon, has no Light but what she borrows from her Husband, and that we can only shine by Reflection; it is necessary then you should know, she can Eclipse him when she pleases. (II. 9)

In terms of its content, the work resembles *Robinson Crusoe* in particular. It may be appropriate here to ask the question: What makes *Robinson Crusoe* a novel and *The Family Instructor* not a novel? Many authorities have set out to define the novel. Mikhail Bakhtin was perhaps the first to describe it as a “mixed” form, reflecting the fact that we are both private individuals but also social beings.<sup>61</sup> Later, both Michael McKeon and J. Paul Hunter have defined the novel, with particular emphasis on that written in English. Hunter’s definition emphasises the novel’s didacticism; clearly this resonates with readers of *The Family Instructor*. Perhaps the answer to the question lies in the author’s point of view. *Robinson Crusoe* contains all sorts of things: philosophising, Crusoe’s view of God, his understanding of Providence and its role in his life, his own history and upbringing and a sense of magic, not merely rationality. Steinbeck described the novel as a box into which he could put whatever he had.<sup>62</sup> Whereas this might help to define the novel, in *The Family*

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<sup>61</sup> M.M. Bakhtin: *Four Essays: Epic and the Novel in The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist trans Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1981).

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Hunter, *Novels*, p. 54.

*Instructor* the writer takes only one position towards his material. Defoe's purpose here is to convince us of the importance of introducing family worship into the life of the home, and he never forgets this. Everything is subservient to this, even his "realism".

As has frequently been remarked by critics before, there is a similarity in theme between the prodigal Crusoe and the elder son in *The Family Instructor*. The rebellious older youngsters are echoed in Crusoe himself, who challenges both the authority of his father and God. Paula Backscheider also notes similarities between the two works. She says, "The Natives and children often become the instruments for the salvation of their families".<sup>63</sup> This is exemplified by the little boy, Tommy, in *The Family Instructor* and by Friday in *Robinson Crusoe*. Backscheider also notes that Crusoe's religious conversion follows the same sequence described by the first father to his little boy in Part I of *The Family Instructor* (I. 60). In Part II of the same work, Defoe refers to the apprentice, Will, whose conversion follows the same lines. He is first overcome with a sense of sin: "he is struck with Horror at his Condition" before he finally is able to repent (I. 184). J. Paul Hunter famously compares *Robinson Crusoe* with the "guide tradition". He notes that "whether or not *The Family Instructor* was [Defoe's] stepping stone to fictional form, the guide tradition provides one vital perspective from which to view fictional theme in *Robinson Crusoe*".<sup>64</sup>

All Defoe's characters are particularised, like those in both volumes of *The Family Instructor*. This is not only true of Robinson Crusoe, but also of Moll Flanders, Bob Singleton, Jack and Roxana. All exist in particularised social circumstances, in, as we might say, the "real" world. In *The Family Instructor* this is achieved through verisimilitude, largely, as we have seen, through dialogue, but also through the setting. Compare for instance

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<sup>63</sup> Backscheider, p. 426.

<sup>64</sup> Hunter, *Pilgrim*, p. 46.

the solidity of the houses in which the families live in *The Family Instructor* as described above with Crusoe's "Castle". Crusoe builds his "Castle" on "a little Plain on the Side of a rising Hill".<sup>65</sup> Here, he pitches his tent, but first inserts two rows of "strong stakes" in a semi-circle round it. Later, he works his way into the rock behind. He describes making this "castle" in great detail, and we can "see" it in the mind's eye, though Defoe moves back and forth in time, interspersing his description of the building of this fortification with other matters, such as the anxiety Crusoe suddenly feels for his powder in the storm and the necessity of finding food. We follow the first family in *The Family Instructor* as they move round from room to room, the elder young woman reading her plays in her Closet and later lying on her bed, pretending to be ill (I. 140). Outside, there is a "Row of Trees", where the young man and his sister walk (I. 145). This is the "Close [...] under the *Lime Trees*". There is also a reference to the "Parlour", the "Stairs" and a "Door" (I. 109). In Part II, Defoe turns to the story of the "industrious Trading Man and the wealthy Shopkeeper" (I. 161-2). The latter has "Warehouses" and Will goes with a "candle" into a "Room" over their "Work-house" (I. 162). There is a difference though. The physical setting in *The Family Instructor* is incidental to Defoe's main purpose, which is to persuade the reader of the necessity of daily family prayer; the houses are only introduced when their existence enables the protagonists to develop the theme. In *Robinson Crusoe*, however, the building of Crusoe's Castle illustrates his meticulous patience and his suffering; it also allows an interpolation of his reflection on his situation on the island.

George Starr reminds us that family ties are significant in all the "novels" as well as in the conduct books.<sup>66</sup> He emphasises that all these ties involve "the dominance of one party – parent, master, mentor, governor, or God – and the submission of the other". These tend to be

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<sup>65</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 58-9. Further references are to this edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

<sup>66</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, ed. George Starr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. ix-x.

stronger than “attachments between the sexes”. Robinson Crusoe constructs his own “family” in the absence of a real one, and in his loneliness and longing for human society. He refers to dining “all alone” but “attended by my servants”, his parrot, dog and two cats (p.148). There is, for Crusoe, of course, no sexual partner. In Volume II of *The Family Instructor*, although the nature of the relationships between the couples is not made explicit, we do get a sense of this by hints. For instance, trivial disputes often mask deeper differences; there is a couple who cannot decide which is the best door by which to go out into the garden (II. 59). Defoe stresses the connection between the wife’s rebellion against God and the breaking of the “Bonds of the Conjugal Relation” (II. 107). One could argue, in fact, that Defoe shows more psychological insight in the conduct books than in his longer narratives, where he is less concerned with relationships than with exploring the effects of social requirements on his protagonists. Defoe often uses parallel or contrasting events in both the long narratives and in the conduct books. For instance, Crusoe’s relationship with his father at the start of the book is paralleled by Friday’s relationship with *his* father later. In *The Family Instructor*, the initial family is mirrored countless by those in later sections, and these have the same problems to face. For example, the husbands in Volume II meet with opposition and struggle to introduce family worship just as the first father in Volume I did.

There is a similarity in the repression of emotion in both *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Both advocate the control of the “passions”. Occasionally the irrational breaks through, in the case of the enraged fathers in *The Family Instructor*, Volume II, and when Robinson Crusoe finds the footprint. In his attempt to change the “passionate” father by illustrative stories, the “Neighbour” describes a father whose behaviour towards his children arose from “a furious, absolute, rash, passionate Conduct” (II. 156). Likewise, Crusoe initially responds to the footprint irrationally.

But after innumerable fluttering Thoughts, like a Man perfectly confus'd and out of my self, I came Home to my Fortification, not feeling, as we say, the Ground I went on, but terrify'd to the last Degree, looking behind me at every two or three Steps, mistaking every Bush and Tree, and fancying every Stump at a Distance to be a Man; nor is it possible to describe how many various Shapes affrighted Imagination represented Things to me in, how many wild Ideas were found every Moment in my Fancy, and what strange unaccountable Whimsies came into my Thoughts by the Way. (p. 154)

Later, when he can think more calmly, he remembers his erstwhile conversion and seeks solace from it. "I then reflected that God, who was not only Righteous but Omnipotent [...] was able to deliver me" (p.157). Given that this is characteristic of both the conduct book and of the eighteenth century in general, perhaps this is no more than we should expect. The preoccupation with the need for the passions to be controlled by reason is as product of the contemporary mind.

We find Defoe's ecumenism in both works. In *Robinson Crusoe* he says, "My Man *Friday* was a Protestant, his Father was a *Pagan* and a *Cannibal*, and the *Spaniard* was a Papist" (p.241). In *The Family Instructor*, as already noted in Chapter Three, Defoe argues that this work applies to both Dissenters and Anglicans. The work also contains exemplary Catholic families and Muslims. Attempting to persuade him of the importance of worship, the apprentice Thomas reports to his fellow apprentice, Will,

There is a Popish Family lives next Door to my Father's, and they are constantly Morning and Evening, and often at other times of the Day too, at their Worship and Prayers, serving God in their Way; nay, I have heard, that the *Turks* say their Prayers Five Times a Day. (I. 170)

Further, through the first couple in Volume II, Defoe is emphatic that the differences between different Protestant sects are unimportant. After their dispute as to which door they should use to go into the garden, the husband says to the wife, "methinks the Church and the

Dissenters act a little as you and I did, [...] one out at one Door and one out at another, but all meet, I hope, in Heaven at last” (II. 59).

A further similarity between *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe* is Defoe’s use of dreams. There is only one in Volume I of the first text, but they abound in Volume II. Mainly they are fairly crude presentiments by the protagonists of what is going to happen, for example, when Jacky envisages his mother’s death-bed conversion (II. 234-5). “A few Days after this Discourse the Mother dy’d, and made a very happy and comfortable End” (II. 240). Defoe was clearly practising for his long narratives. The closest approximation between *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe* in this regard, is when the Friend’s wife, Sir Richard’s sister, lies ill and near conversion. Like Crusoe, she is wracked with guilt, here for her determination to murder her husband; “In her Dream she fancy’d her Conscience reproach’d her with the reflection upon her Wicked Resolution” (II. 103). Her guilt leads her to hear, in her dream, a voice in the thunder, and she is at pains to have her maid corroborate the reality of the storm (II. 105). Crusoe also hears such a voice, and, of course, sees the vision of the angel of death (pp. 87-8). In the latter narrative, it is a much longer and slower event. Crusoe’s “ague” lasts from 19 June his journal tells us, till 4 July. If we acknowledge the whole episode’s centrality to the story we see why it takes up over eleven pages, whereas, here, Defoe disposes of the woman’s illness and dream in just over four. Defoe was clearly interested in the supernatural and what it had to say about his contemporaries. In 1727 he was to write “*A System of Magick*” and the following year “*An Essay on the History and Reality of Apparitions*”. As several critics have remarked, and as Peter Elmer, who edited the first text for Pickering & Chatto, points out, “the subject matter, [...] was a long-standing interest of the author”.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A System of Magick* (London, 1727); *Satire, Fantasy and Writings on the Supernatural by Daniel Defoe*, 8 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2003-4), VII, ed. Peter Elmer., p. 1.

Unlike *Robinson Crusoe*, but like other contemporary and previous conduct books, *The Family Instructor* portrays a settled world, one where all is ordered through the action of “God”. Crusoe has to find his “God” and sort out his relationship with Him, coming to accept His purpose in putting Crusoe in physical and psychological isolation. He must create and impose his own order on the island where he finds himself. He does this by re-creating what he remembers of England, slowly and laboriously making all the artefacts he needs for everyday life. He acquires identity by this means and by coming to terms with what he had rejected, namely parental and godly demands. Similarly, Crusoe questions his fate and is able to make an accommodation with his religion. In her essay on *Robinson Crusoe* Elizabeth Napier re-works some of the concerns in *The Family Instructor*. She argues that “Crusoe’s impulse toward the objective and the orderly plays a crucial role in his narrative” and that it is this which leads him to “the apprehension of divine pattern”.<sup>68</sup> She goes on to demonstrate how “Crusoe is brought to discern the larger significance of the physical and spiritual world” through his reliance on physical objects.<sup>69</sup> There is no questioning in *The Family Instructor*. On the contrary, where Crusoe discovers, the Family knows for certain. There is no doubt about either Defoe’s purpose in writing the book or the type of faith the first Family advocates. In his “Preface” to the first volume Defoe alludes to “*the good Effect of his Labour*” (I. 43). He feels his work has had its intended exemplary effect on his readers. He stresses the importance of the “Catechising of Children” (I. 45). Later he emphasises that:

In the pursuit of this Book care is taken to avoid Distinctions of Opinion, as to Church of *England* or *Dissenter*, and no Offence can be taken here either on the one Side or the other; as I hope *both* are Christians, so *both* are treated here as such, and the Advice is impartially directed *to both* without the least Distinction. (I. 46)

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<sup>68</sup> Elizabeth R. Napier, ‘Objects and Order in *Robinson Crusoe*’ *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 80 (1981) (pp. 84-94), 84.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

The first father is described as “Orthodox in Opinion, but Heterodox in Practice”; likewise his wife is “a formal, loose-living Christian”, but both are quite certain of their “Duty” to introduce family worship (I. 46, 69). As is pointed out in the chapter on Religion, this “Duty” falls to Anglicans and Dissenters alike. In the same chapter it is also argued that, nevertheless, Defoe’s Presbyterianism gets the better of him and another similarity between *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe* is evident.

Crusoe shares with the protagonists in *The Family Instructor* a type of Presbyterian, non-Anglican, Christianity. This could be rooted in the “spiritual autobiography” which characterised Puritan behaviour, as suggested by George Starr.<sup>70</sup> For example, whilst on his island, before his “conversion”, Crusoe goes through all the stages which the first father itemises to his small son in the first volume of *The Family Instructor* (I. 54– 60). He is first awakened to a sense of his own sinfulness (pp. 90-3); the starting point is his conviction that human nature is corrupt. This “conviction” leads to “repentance” (p. 96). Then, through the action of “converting grace” Crusoe comes to be “justified” or accepted by God, despite his essential unrighteousness. Finally, he is “sanctified” (p. 97), though this stage, notes Isabel Rivers, usually only comes fully after death.<sup>71</sup> Although the Church of England also believed that human nature was corrupt, all the other features belong to an essentially Calvinist view of life. Crusoe further displays the Dissenter’s anxiety about keeping the Sabbath. When cutting the notches on his piece of wood to keep his sense of the passage of time and of dates, he is careful to differentiate the “Sabbath Days” by cutting a longer notch than the six other

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<sup>70</sup> Starr, *Spiritual Autobiography*.

<sup>71</sup> Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), I, pp. 10-11.

ones (p. 64). At times he is dependant on Bibliomancy; he opens the Bible and sees in the verse upon which he lights a relevance to his own situation (p. 94).

Whilst Novak's suggestion that Defoe mastered dialogue in his conduct books may be valid, there is a potential difficulty in that in *Robinson Crusoe* there is no dialogue.<sup>72</sup> As J. Donald Crowley points out, however, "That style (of *Robinson Crusoe*) is a spoken one, responding to the various rhythms of speech rather than to the requirements of typographical regularity which the modern reader is accustomed to" (p. xxv). Crusoe himself is aware of the lack of human contact and thus of conversation. He attempts to teach his parrot to speak, not realising that the bird can only mimic what humans teach it; it can never internalise a linguistic system, as can even the youngest child beginning to talk. Whilst it would be unfair to blame Defoe for not understanding something only apparent to us in the twentieth century, the episode is significant in that it demonstrates the degree of Crusoe's isolation. The parrot frightens him when it wakes him up by calling him by his familiar name, "Robin", on his return from his fateful trip round the island (p.142). More significant, however, is the use of reported speech in both works. Towards the end of Part I of Volume II of *The Family Instructor*, the dialogue becomes increasingly expressed in reported speech (II. 101-07). For instance, when Defoe tells us of the wife's dream of poisoning her husband, of the "voice from heaven" in the thunder (II. 105), this immediately calls to mind Crusoe's illness and dream of the avenging angel (pp. 87-8). *The Family Instructor* becomes a story either told in reported prose or it describes the wife's thoughts when she is alone. In fact, Defoe's handling of the plot here nearly overbalances the work. He has so much to say that he resorts to prose, which seems quicker than dialogue, as if he starts to become more interested in the story of the wife than in his theme. He has to tell us about the wife's friend, who inadvertently suggests to her that she poisons her husband; about Susan, the faithful servant, who looks

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<sup>72</sup> Novak, *Cambridge Companion*, p. 59.

after her mistress; about the wife's experiences and increasing illness, and about the whereabouts of Sir Richard and the husband. Whilst the reader is interested in the story, in the fate of the wife, Defoe steps in and says, "We must now leave her for a while and go back to Sir *Richard*" (II. 107). The tale of Sir Richard's conversion is the important fact here. We never go back to the suffering wife, however.

If Novak is right in saying that *The Family Instructor* is an experiment in form, then we should look particularly at the technicalities in *Robinson Crusoe* and expect to find similarities between the two works, or a progression from one to the other. Both propositions can be shown to be true. For example, where in *The Family Instructor* the narrator is both in the endnotes, commenting on the action, and a participant in it, by the time Defoe wrote *Robinson Crusoe* his protagonist is both in the story and a commentator upon it, though the speaking "voice" of the narrator has become incorporated into the text. This is the autobiographical voice which Defoe used for all his long narratives. When Crusoe first sees the footprint, he expresses his feelings of terror on finding it; later, he reflects on it, "O, what ridiculous Resolution Men take, when possess'd with Fear!" (p.159). However, this begs the question of whether or not there is a mechanical connection between *The Family Instructor* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Whilst it has been shown that there is a connection between the two works and that Defoe used many of the devices in *The Family Instructor* which he was later to use in *Robinson Crusoe*, of didactic literary works like the former J. Paul Hunter asserts "They are part of the context that makes the novel possible, but they do not lead to it in a simple, mechanical, and straightforward way".<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Hunter, *Novels*, p. 301.

Defoe's "realism" has been much commented upon, and I have illustrated this above. But it is the *appearance* of reality in *The Family Instructor* and in *Robinson Crusoe* which strikes the reader. What is remarkable about the latter, and indeed all Defoe's long narratives, is that it is experienced through the consciousness of the individual whose story is being told. And this quality is evident in *The Family Instructor*. The youngsters in Part I do not react in the same way as Crusoe, but they react to their situation as they perceive it, as do the wives and husbands in Volume II. It is the perception of reality, rather than its presentation *per se*, which links the two works. Both treat perception in the same way. For example, when Crusoe is carried by the currents away from his island, he looks back on it as a place of security. His "desolate, solitary, Island" becomes his "Beloved Island". He comments on his experiences, drawing from them general principles.

They who know what it is to have a Reprieve brought to them upon the Ladder, or to be rescued from Thieves just a going to murder them, or, who have been in such like Extremities, may guess what my Surprise of joy was, and how gladly I put my boat into the Stream of this Eddy, and the wind also freshening, how gladly I spread my Sail to it, running cheerfully before the Wind, and with a strong Tide or Eddy under Foot. (p. 140)

Crusoe's experiences are, as we might say, "all in the mind". And we never escape from his head. This is more powerful than the itemising of, for instance, the things he salvages from the wreck before it goes down, the circumstantial detail for which Defoe is well known.

Similarly, in *The Family Instructor*, the argument between the first husband and wife in Volume II, though ostensibly about the instigation of family worship, is in fact about the relationship between the two people. It is about their compatibility. The Friend says to the Citizen, "Vertuous Love is founded upon two things only, both which are wanting in her, *Merit* and *Suitability*" (II. 16). The argument turns on whether or not to say grace before meals. The husband suggests that there was "something wanting [...] at Supper tonight". The wife considers it is "perfectly ungentle to do it publikly" (II. 19). She manages to embarrass

her husband in the eyes of her brother, Sir Richard, by disclosing the source of their difference. It is in the heat of this quarrel that the accident to the husband's nose happens. The two are eventually reconciled, but it is the perceptions of husband and wife which are stressed and we see the story through their eyes (II. 19-23).

Michael Seidel develops this idea powerfully.<sup>74</sup> Seidel sees Defoe as promoting a theory of fiction in *Robinson Crusoe*. He argues that, "the mind expands upon circumstances to engage the reader's interest only if the 'wonders' described [...] are perceived as probable".<sup>75</sup> This, argues Seidel, explains Defoe's insistence on the veracity of his stories. Similarly, in *The Family Instructor*, Defoe stresses that the "family [is] known" and that his purpose in writing the work is "rather to instruct other Families, than to reproach those who may think themselves concern'd" (I. 110). Likewise, introducing Part II he insists that the experience of the family is based on a real one. He asserts that what is to come "may be particularly observ'd from the remarkable Conduct of some Persons belonging to Two or Three Families in a certain known Country-Corporation at some Distance from *London*" (I. 161). In the Preface to *Robinson Crusoe* he confirms that this is the tale of the young mariner from "York" who tells his story "himself".

P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens take issue with Walter Scott and others who imply that Defoe has only one style.<sup>76</sup> After demonstrating his variety, they detail the qualities that Defoe is known for: his use of whole paragraphs, where other writers use sentences, his fondness for

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<sup>74</sup> Michael Seidel, "Robinson Crusoe: varieties of fictional experience", in Richetti, *Defoe Companion*, pp. 182–198.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>76</sup> P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 125-133.

interpolation and his vivid writing style which carries the reader along with him. There is plenty of evidence of this in *Robinson Crusoe*. Take, for instance, the passages in which Defoe describes Crusoe's battle with the sea and his first setting foot on the island.

Nothing can describe the Confusion of Thought which I felt when I sunk into the Water; for tho' I swam very well, yet I could not deliver myself from the Waves so as to draw Breath, till that Wave having driven me, or rather carried me a vast Way on towards the Shore, and having spent itself, went back, and left me upon the Land almost dry, but half-dead with the Water I took in. (p. 44)

Crusoe is forced by the sea towards the land, but is then sucked back by each returning wave, before he can eventually get on land (pp. 46-48). All these passages are sentences and paragraphs and Defoe's love of interpolation is evident: "that Wave having driven me, or rather carried me a vast Way on towards the Shore" (p. 44). Finally, he asserts:

The last Time of these two had well near been fatal to me; for the Sea having hurried me along as before, landed me, or rather dash'd me against a Piece of Rock, and that with such Force, as it left me senseless, and indeed helpless, as to my own Deliverance; for the Blow taking my Side and breast, beat the breath as it were quite out of my Body; and had it returned again immediately, I must have been strangled in the Water; but I recover'd a little before the return of the Waves, and seeing I should be cover'd again with Water, I resolv'd to hold fast by a piece of Rock, and so to hold my Breath, if possible, till the Wave went back; now as the Waves were not so high as at first, being nearer Land, I held my Hold till the Wave abated, and then fetch'd another Run, which brought me so near the Shore, that the next Wave, tho' it went over me, yet did not so swallow me up as to carry me away, and the next run I took, I got to the Land, where, to my great Comfort, I clamber'd up the Clifts of the Shore, and sat me down upon the Grass, free from Danger, and quite out of the Reach of the Water. (pp. 45-6)

The reader is certainly drawn into Crusoe's story. Will he survive, we wonder? Furbank and Owens go on to argue that Defoe, whilst being fully capable of writing a "Ciceronian" sentence, in which the end is evident to the writer in the beginning, when appropriate, he frequently uses what they call "improvisatory" sentences, in which he really does not know how they are going to end. Let us look in detail at Defoe's style in *The Family Instructor*, taking first a passage from Volume II.

He fail'd not to take all Opportunities to speak to her himself after this; but found his Wife, as he thought, had taken a new Method; for as before she would always answer him with something ill-natur'd and unkind, So now tho' she were ever so free in Discourse of other Things, when ever he began to speak of this Affair, she would not answer one Word.

We can see that the passage is one sentence and paragraph (II. 52). It opens with whole sentences. The final part, where the reader learns of the fate of the rebellious wife, consists of parallelisms and contrasts, from “for as before she would always answer him with something very ill-natur'd and unkind,” to the end of the passage. This thought is interrupted by a conditional clause beginning “so now tho' [...]”

The most characteristic and most detailed example, however, may be found on the following page (II. 53).

The Physician being at Hand, they were not so much at a Loss for applying proper Remedies; but it was so long e'er they recover'd him, that the Doctor himself was once of the Opinion that he was dead, and was going out of the Room; but some Signs of Life appearing soon after, they went on with their Applications, and opening a Vein, the Blood flowing, recovered him to Life, but left him very ill, which was followed by a Fever, and that threw him into the Small-Pox, which it seems he had not had, and from which he did not recover without great Danger of his Life.

If we take this sentence apart we note that it starts with a gerund, which is really a conditional sentence beginning “since”. This leads to a whole sentence stating “they were not so much at a Loss [...]”, which is followed by a qualifying statement introduced by “but”.

There results the insertion of the dramatic references to the Doctor leaving the room, thinking the man is dead, which is interrupted by another qualifier, “but some Signs of Life appearing soon after” leading to statements that “they went on with their Applications [...]”. There are equal and balanced statements introduced by “and”, leading to another qualifier, “but left him very ill”. This is followed by a whole clause introduced by a relative “which was followed by a Fever”. This leads to a further equal, balanced statement, “and that threw him into the

Small-Pox”, interrupted by the relative clause, almost as an aside, “which it seems he had not had”. Finally, Defoe reaches a resolution, introducing the balanced clause “and from which he did not recover without great Danger of his Life”. The whole illustrates Defoe’s near “stream of consciousness”, his predilection for the sentence as paragraph and for subordinate clauses introduced by “but”. The reader notes this characteristic in particular. There are three “but” clauses in this paragraph as sentence, eight on page 53 as a whole and three on the previous page. Thomas Corns suggests that in Milton’s prose we find “a high incidence of subordinate clauses which depend [...] on clauses which are themselves subordinate”.<sup>77</sup> The same is true of Defoe’s writing. This passage is fast-moving, vivid, with arresting subject matter, and the reader wonders what happens to both the wife and the husband in the end. Thus we find in the second part of *The Family Instructor* many of the qualities of writing which Defoe was to use in *Robinson Crusoe*. However, we do not find many examples illustrating his love of interpolation, or of the qualifying statements such as he uses in the description of Crusoe’s struggle against the waves when he first gets to the island. The overall result, however, is that the reader is carried along by the syntax. Speaking of *Robinson Crusoe*, J. Donald Crowley maintains, “It is a loose, casual style that often seems hurried because of its frequent repetition and its reliance on unexpressed connective words and phrases” (p. xxv). *Robinson Crusoe* often reads like an early form of “stream of consciousness”. The description of Crusoe’s voyages to the wreck before it sinks, for example, has immediacy and detail, following as it does Crusoe’s every thought and action. The whole description takes the best part of five pages (pp. 48-53).

However, none of those who comment on Defoe’s style have mentioned his handling of time, his ability to hold up a story and intersperse other events without losing his narrative thread

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<sup>77</sup> Thomas E. Corns, *The Development of Milton’s Prose Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p. 21.

or theme. Paul Alkon is mainly concerned with “the question of how temporal settings within narratives may be related to the outside world of clock- and calendar-time, the question of how time-concepts shared within a culture may influence expectations about the writing and reading of fiction, and above all the question of how narratives shape the phenomenal time experienced by their readers.”<sup>78</sup> Later, however, when discussing “The Reader’s Memory” and the role it plays in Defoe’s fiction, Alkon notes that,

Defoe’s narratives most often follow the sequence of plot time: what happened first is narrated first, and the order of narration follows the order of narrated events. But the departures from this chronological order which synchronizes narrative and plot sequence are a significant feature of Defoe’s style. [...] Within scenes, however, he may present information allowing the outcome of that scene to be known before the narrative arrives at that scene’s conclusion. Thus Defoe achieves by local strategy many of the effects that depend upon that reversal of narrative sequence and plot sequence which allows the reader to be informed about what is going to happen before being told how it comes about.<sup>79</sup>

Defoe perfected this ability in *The Family Instructor*. The seventh dialogue, for instance, concerns the first father and his elder son, George. It returns the reader to the point reached in the fourth dialogue, where this father “sent for his Eldest Daughter”, who refused to “go down” to him (I. 140, 109). In the interim we have had the contrast between the younger and elder brothers and sisters, illustrating the theme, and in the endnote Defoe reminds the reader that the point of this dialogue is to illustrate the difference between the two sisters, the younger, “dutifully submitting to Family Government” and the elder “obstinately adhering to the dictates of [her] Passions” (I. 110). In dialogue six Defoe refers us to the “Discourse between the *Husband and his Wife*, when they come to talk about it” (namely the behaviour of their elder children) as they do after the eighth dialogue (I. 130, 159). This points forward to the end of the story of the first family.

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<sup>78</sup> Paul K. Alkon, *Defoe and Fictional Time* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1979), p. 2.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

In *Robinson Crusoe* Defoe shows the same skill in moving back and forth within the events of his story without losing track of it. Crusoe tells the reader about the building of his “fortress” and of the cave behind it, but notes that “in the Interval of time while this was doing I went out once at least every Day with my Gun, as well to divert myself, as to see if I could kill anything fit for Food” (pp. 60-1). This is when he finds the goats on the island and tells us how he kills a mother and later her kid. He goes on to describe his thoughts, his first questioning of “Providence” and the insight that no situation is all bad. Finally he recounts his resolution to keep track of time by cutting notches in a post (pp. 61-2). Later he tells us that it took him “a whole Year” to complete his fortress (p. 65).

In conclusion, we should mention Defoe’s sheer joy in narrative, which one sees in both *The Family Instructor* and in *Robinson Crusoe*, and which is surely the link between the two works. He clearly had a great love for stories and retained them with ease. For a man of his background and persuasion this ability could be construed as the telling of lies. It is unfortunate that his Puritanism worked against this gift so powerfully, causing him to justify his tales as “parables” or “fables”. Many commentators have noted his story-telling ability. George Starr, for instance, explains. “Defoe identifies his own fabrications as fables – a genre that was morally edifying and therefore respectable, despite being patently fictional”.<sup>80</sup> Paula Backscheider also describes Defoe as “an inveterate teller of tales [who] believed firmly in the effectiveness of illustrative stories”.<sup>81</sup> She maintains that he would have grown up with two exemplary figures, Samuel Annesley, the Defoe family’s pastor, and Charles Morton, whose Academy Defoe attended, probably between 1674 and 1679. She attests that

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<sup>80</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Serious Reflections During the Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (London, 1720), *Novels*, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), III, ed. George Starr, p. 25.

<sup>81</sup> Backscheider, p. xii.

“Annesley’s sermons are full of illustrative, familiar anecdotes”.<sup>82</sup> Charles Morton explained that, “Romances, and parables, or fables, [...] are not Lyes, but Ingenious Poesy [...] or handsome Oratory, the better to Inculcate the virtue, or express the vice they Designe to represent; and are of singular Use in all Discourse”.<sup>83</sup> By following these two mentors Defoe was able to find a way of telling stories without jeopardising his Puritanical view of fiction. *The Great Law of Subordination Consider’d*, a diatribe against the “Unsufferable behaviour of Servants”, is advertised as containing, among other things, “remarkable Stories”. After referring to the “wicked Custom of Cursing” he illustrates this with the two stories of his servant William and his “Steward”.<sup>84</sup> In the Introduction to *Conjugal Lewdness*, published three years later in 1727, it is the other way around; he stresses that he will “find you Subject of Diversion enough, mix’d with the Gravity of the Story”.<sup>85</sup> A key feature of a story-teller is the ability to keep the reader interested, to arouse in her or him the desire to find out “what happens next”. That Defoe has this ability is evident not only in the long narratives such as *Robinson Crusoe* but also in what are referred to as his conduct books. *The Family Instructor* tells the story of the first family and the story of the two apprentices. We wonder what will become of the two older young people in the first family. It is this thought which holds together the first volume. Similarly, we want to know the outcome of Crusoe’s narrative. Will he survive his island isolation? In the second volume of *The Family Instructor* there are many couples, who, for various reasons, all struggle to introduce family worship, which is the subject of both volumes, but they all have their stories. At one stage in *The Family Instructor* Defoe intersperses a story within the overall story, relating the tale of a “wicked Boy” within the broader tale (I. 70). Another “story within a story” occurs in volume two (II. 161). This is the story of an equally unsuccessful father, one who is over-indulgent to his children. This

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>83</sup> Charles Morton, *Of Ethics and Its End* (Harvard MS. Am.911). Quoted in Backscheider, p. 17.

<sup>84</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Great Law of Subordination Consider’d* (London, 1724), *Religious and Didactic Works*, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), VI, ed. J.A. Downie, pp. 40, 53, 60.

<sup>85</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Conjugal Lewdness* (London, 1727), *Religious and Didactic Works*, V, ed. L. Bellamy, p. 34.

presents a different angle on the same problem: where one father is “passionately” beating his son in a rage, this father is too “passionately” fond of his child. Both are “wrong” in their excess of emotion.

Clearly, then, reading the 1715 and 1718 books of *The Family Instructor* encourages a religious interpretation of *Robinson Crusoe*. There are parallels, not only directly between the “prodigal son” motif in both works. As George Starr, in comparing *Crusoe* to spiritual autobiography, has pointed out, the long narrative exemplifies the conventional progression from sin to redemption as itemised by the first Father in *The Family Instructor* to his small son.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Hunter sees *Robinson Crusoe* as exemplifying the particularly Puritan struggle of one man, who nevertheless represents all men, as he works his way through the “rebellion, punishment, repentance and deliverance [...] in a hostile world” even more directly reflecting the pattern found in *The Family Instructor*.<sup>87</sup> Pat Rogers backs this up. Whilst concerned that both Starr and Hunter overstate their case, he concedes that “seen as a Puritan fable of spiritual life, [...*Robinson Crusoe*] appears not only different, but also, in crucial ways, a better book: more deeply imagined and more cunningly wrought”. Indeed, he later states, “All the signs are that Defoe, from the very beginning, meant the novel to bear these monitory functions.”<sup>88</sup> Whilst this may be so, it is its form, and the variety of literary devices Defoe uses in *The Family Instructor*, however, which presage, as much as anything, the writing we find in *Robinson Crusoe*. Despite *The Family Instructor*’s resemblance to the conduct book genre in its didacticism, in its wish to tell the reader how to behave religiously,

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<sup>86</sup> Starr, *Spiritual Autobiography*, pp. 74-125.

<sup>87</sup> Hunter, *Pilgrim*, pp. 126-189.

<sup>88</sup> Rogers, pp. 53, 56.

it does sometimes seem as if in this work Defoe is practising for the first of the long narratives.

## Conclusion

I was originally drawn to *The Family Instructor* because of the behaviour of the two elder children in Volume I, George and Mary.<sup>1</sup> They resembled, I thought, modern teenagers, in their defiance of their parents. What was Defoe doing here? Paula Backscheider suggests that *The Family Instructor* “was probably written partly as a guide for his own children, and some parts of it may record some of his own experiences”.<sup>2</sup> Whether or not we accept this, Defoe was clearly interested in the motivation of his characters, and this shows in *The Family Instructor*. Later, I became interested in the wives at the start of Volume II, who challenge their husbands. John Richetti alluded to Defoe’s ability to “ventriloquise”; Defoe could undoubtedly put himself in the position of people whose opinions he did not share, and express himself convincingly from their point of view.<sup>3</sup> Let us consider the first father in Volume I of *The Family Instructor*. Although the refusal of these first parents to shift blame from themselves creates sympathy in the reader, the first father is quick to blame his eldest daughter. When he hears she is to be married, he declares to members of the family, “You are all mad” (I.255). He also threatens his elder son (I.135). He is uncompromising, telling him, “You may take your Choice; for *God* or the *Devil*” (I. 139). Elsewhere in *The Family Instructor* Defoe is more ecumenical than this. He shows himself to be more tolerant of differences of religion by his reference to the fact that “the *Turks* say their Prayers Five

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor*, Volume I (London, 1715) and Volume II (London, 1718); Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor*, ed. P.N. Furbank, 10 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006). All references are to this latter edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

<sup>2</sup> Backscheider, p. 362.

<sup>3</sup> Richetti, *Crusoe*, p. xiii.

Times a Day: Why, it is natural to pray to God, *Will, did he not make us?*" (I.170). We therefore know that Defoe does not share the views of the first father.

As Defoe seemed to be doing something different in *The Family Instructor*, I began this thesis with a hypothesis which I proceeded to test: namely that *The Family Instructor* was transitional and that it was therefore not easily categorised; it could be shown to be so, by looking at its contexts. To what extent is this hypothesis borne out? By looking at *The Family Instructor* in the contexts of family and religion, and analysing his style, we can see that when Defoe was writing notions of family structure were changing dramatically, especially in relation to the role of the father. He was becoming less a patriarch and more an exemplar of modern fatherhood. Change happens slowly, however. It should be remembered that many of the changes which came to fruition in the eighteenth century had their origins in the previous one. Defoe's writing often reflects the tensions between the old and new ways of seeing the world.

There remain in *The Family Instructor* intimations of the patriarchy of a previous age, with clear links from God, to monarch, to father. Maximillian E. Novak argues that in this work Defoe is attempting "a return to what was becoming a somewhat old-fashioned concept of the family – one in which all the members, including the servants, were called together for prayers every morning".<sup>4</sup> In this context, disobedience to one's biological father was almost as reprehensible as disobedience to one's heavenly father, since the former represented the latter on earth. In the earlier form of family, which relied on hierarchy and patriarchal status, the head of the household, that is, the husband, was responsible for all who lived or were staying temporarily under his roof. This included his servants and apprentices; even his

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<sup>4</sup> Novak, *Companion*, pp. 44-5.

visitors. Defoe illustrates this by presenting the two apprentices in Volume I part II, both of whose fathers clearly have a duty to bring them up according to the practice of family worship. The later type of family is closer to what we recognise and accept. It was characterised by only two generations: mother, father and children. Crucially, this later type of family depends on desert not on status, and is characterised, suggests Laurence Stone, by affectionate relationships between its members. The closeness of *The Family Instructor* and William Fleetwood's version of the family, as expressed in *The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants* is noted, and the works of Laurence Stone, Gordon Schochet, Keith Wrightson and Randolph Trumbach are discussed. These commentators differ as to the dates when the two forms of family existed, but they all agree that both did so. Their differences suggest to us the problematic nature of defining the earlier and later forms of family and the accurate dating of their existence is clearly difficult.

Central to my argument is the fact that the first father in *The Family Instructor* seems to exemplify both types of family. He displays the affectionate relationship with his youngest son and his wife, but he reverts to the earlier model of the family when under threat (I. 50, 75, 137). Especially in the portrayal of the father in Volume 1, Defoe's family appears to cut across both the modern and the earlier version. This father is an example of the affectionate relationship between his closest family members, yet he is also responsible for his servants, as is shown in Defoe's organisation of the work on his title page to Volume I. This first father claims it is "reasonable" to perform daily worship, yet the family is broken apart by his attempts to enforce this practice. Defoe was surely aware of the fact that the family he presents here reflects both the old and new ways of seeing the world and that this father is unappealing, both to his elder children and to the reader. Perhaps Defoe knew when he was writing this work that it was exemplary of the old and the new ways of seeing the world, and that the father has therefore an impossible task.

What then does “reason” mean? Similarly, what meaning can the concept of obedience have in an increasingly secular age, when humankind is coming to see itself as independent of authority? Both Volumes of *The Family Instructor* explore the meaning of reason, along with the concepts of duty, obedience and authority as well as patriarchy. Reason is often opposed to passion, as it has been from time immemorial, and Defoe frequently illustrates it. His position is clear; he disapproves of this emotion. For instance, he stresses the young man’s obeying his passion as opposed to his parents’ wishes. The fathers in Volume II illustrate this theme copiously. “Mr H\_” seems, says Furbank, “almost a lunatic” (I. 34). Reason seems to mean family worship, yet as I have suggested, it is not possible for the fathers here to succeed. They seem to demonstrate both the more modern and authoritarian versions of the family, which are ultimately incompatible.

The first parents often refer to their “Duty” to introduce family worship. Indeed, the whole work is designed to show this and to convince the reader; every father in the work sees it as his “Duty”. “Obedience” is the preoccupation of Volume II: the wives should “Obey” their husbands, as they struggle to introduce family worship. These concepts were not clear-cut in 1715 and 1718. This is another example of Defoe’s transitional position.

Can the same be said of his religion? Defoe is considered by nearly all his biographers to be a Dissenter. Strictly speaking, there were no Dissenters prior to the publication of the so-called “Clarendon Acts”, from which many dissented, soon after the restoration of Charles II, although the presence of “Dissenters” as Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and

Quakers was evident before that. Of greater significance is the fact that Defoe was clearly a Dissenter. He inherited a tradition which was always associated with regicide, with the execution of Charles I, purportedly by Oliver Cromwell. This tradition saw imagination as the invention of potential “lies”, although Defoe would have had as his models Samuel Annesley and Charles Morton. Dissenters also, despite the paucity of their actual numbers, were considered a social threat. Defoe thought of himself as a member of a “persecuted minority” states Paula Backscheider, one among many biographers making the same point.<sup>5</sup> Defoe maintained that he wrote in support of Dissenters all his life. Although he claims *The Family Instructor* applies equally to Dissenters and to members of the Anglican community, who were alike charged with the introduction of family worship, in this work his Dissenting origins take priority (I.68). In his “Notes on the First dialogue” Defoe refers to the relevance of the work to all readers, be they Church of England or belonging to any other “Protestant churches”; but through his emphasis on the importance of keeping the Sabbath, of not swearing and of the significance of “the elect”, we can assume that his Dissenting origins are paramount, despite what he says.

Although similar to traditional conduct books in many ways, and though it is usually so categorised, *The Family Instructor* is very different from the traditional conduct book. There are, nevertheless, striking similarities between *The Family Instructor* and traditional conduct books. These were very popular with contemporary readers, and Defoe may have taken this into account when he published *The Family Instructor*. To begin with, they have similarities of theme. Like *The Family Instructor*, conduct books stress the importance of obedience to one’s parents, regardless of the parents’ merit. They also emphasise the importance of beginning religious instruction while the children are young. Defoe’s work, whilst it is

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<sup>5</sup> Backscheider, p.7.

similar in many ways, differs from them in key respects, however. Whilst most conduct books are characterised by the example of family prayers in the morning and evening, with prayers suitable for the Sabbath, in sickness and at death, in *The Family Instructor* Defoe emphasises what happens when such a regime is *not* followed. Unlike conduct books, his work is not hortatory.

*The Family Instructor* is also written in dialogue. Paula Backscheider commented that “some of its dialogue is hopelessly stilted”.<sup>6</sup> But is this the case? Though Richard Baxter had produced *The Poor Man’s Family Book* in dialogue in 1674, it is very different from *The Family Instructor*, depending largely on the conversation between Paul and Saul, which, though it purports to be written in everyday language, has nothing of Defoe’s colloquialism. When quoting the apprentice, Will, Defoe confirms he was “as tired as a Dog” (I. 167). The “eldest Daughter [who] was about eighteen Years old” tells her mother she “would go to the Park [...], ay that she would” (my underlining) (I. 95). Where Baxter has his two characters disputing about religious priorities, Defoe uses real psychological insight. The wives at the outset of Volume II are very believable; and, given the unfamiliarity for the modern reader of their belief in the importance of introducing family worship, the parents in Volume I are convincingly “real”; for instance, they are worried about the effect on their elder children (I. 89-90).

Significantly, none of the traditional conduct books has “end-notes”. Defoe usually uses these to re-interpret what has gone before, bringing out what he considered were the key points he had illustrated, but increasingly, as the work progresses, he uses them to explain what is to

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 364.

come. The first dialogue of the last part concerns the eldest daughter's potential marriage to the son-in-law of her Aunt and the reactions of her parents to it. There is no end-note, but Defoe briefly introduces the coming dialogue on the following page. This paragraph is a transition (I. 257-9). Further, the end-note between Dialogues Seven and Eight in Volume I of *The Family Instructor* acts as a link in narration rather than pointing up the moral of what has gone before: it alludes to the content of the coming dialogue (I. 141).

In *The Family Instructor* Defoe's love of narrative is also evident. In the first place, he mentions "stories". In his "Introduction to the First Part" Defoe refers to the fact that the mother and father's "Story" is to be considered as an exemplar. He states that "much of the Story is Historical"(I. 47). Early in the first volume he interpolates the story of "a wicked Boy", by way of illustration of his point (I.70). He frequently describes events. At the end of Volume I, the relation of what happened between the aunt and her niece, regarding the latter's marriage, is expressed in reported speech. The niece's brother's interjections are questions which serve to prompt her to continue (I. 266-9). The son-in-law does not speak for himself until page 273 (I . 273). Defoe's interest in the psychological veracity of his protagonists is clear from his portrayal of many of his characters; we can consider his "father" at the start of Part II of Volume II (II. 123-4). This father is also exemplary, as is the "good, grave, sober, and religious Woman, a near Relation of his Wife's" to whom he entrusts his children and his household affairs. Defoe here shows his understanding of people. They are not necessarily "bad" nor do they intend evil towards their charges; they are simply misguided (II. 124-6). Incidental truth to reality is also evident. The neighbour who interrupts this father's beating his son in a "Passion", "made the Discourse of some other Business serve for the Reason of his knocking at the Door" (II. 126-7).

While *The Family Instructor* differs from traditional conduct books in key respects, it also seems to anticipate the extended prose narratives we now call novels. The content of *The Family Instructor* and that of *Robinson Crusoe* is similar. Patently both works make use of the “prodigal son” motif. When Crusoe first disobeys his father by boarding the ship bound for London, he refers to himself as a “repenting prodigal”. Yet he does not return to his father, but allows himself to be persuaded by his “companion” to go to sea again (pp. 8-9).<sup>7</sup> After the storm in the Yarmouth Roads he refers a second time to the same “parable”, but again, fails to return home (p. 14). Much later, when he is on the island, he sees his behaviour in terms of his disobedience to his father, calling the rejection of his advice his “original sin” (p. 194). In *The Family Instructor* the “prodigal” story is reflected in the fate of the elder son in Volume I., who does not return to his father either, but, through a misunderstanding, fails to make contact with him, and “dies miserable”, says Defoe (I. 160). Defoe had explored the theme of disobedience in *The Family Instructor*. In this work he had shown an ambivalence towards the first father, clearly admiring him on the one hand and presenting him as an unlikeable character on the other (I. 92 and I. 293). In *Robinson Crusoe* it is as if he wishes to explore the same theme in a more realistic form.

In *Robinson Crusoe*, the progression from sin to redemption follows the same pattern as that shown in *The Family Instructor*. The smallest boy is first overcome with a sense of sin and unworthiness, before he feels he can be accepted by God (I. 73). This recalls the experience of Will, the apprentice, in *The Family Instructor*, who is first overcome by the awfulness of his sin, then is justified and sanctified (I. 184-5, 196, 198). The type of religion advocated in

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). All references are to this edition and are given in parenthesis in the text.

both *The Family Instructor* and in *Robinson Crusoe* is also similar. The focus is on a simple, Presbyterian type of Christianity. The Bible, which was important to all Protestants, is emphasised. The first father in *The Family Instructor* tells his young son, “In this Book, *the Bible*, you may learn enough to save you, and bring you to [God]” (I. 63). Crusoe, likewise, took a Bible from the wreck. Much later he finds it a comfort to him (p. 94). As the Mother tells her child in *The Family Instructor* “praising God for Mercies receiv’d, is Part of the Duty of Prayer” (I. 75). Crusoe, after his Dream, responds in a similar way (p. 96). The catechising of Friday echoes that of the first child (I. 45 et seq. and p. 216 et seq.). There is also an emphasis on God’s anger in both works. As P.N. Furbank notes in his introduction to *The Family Instructor*., “The business of the Christian life was not reconciliation with God but obedience to his sovereign will” (I. 22). The first mother tells her small son, “Sin is offending God in Thought, Word, and Deed, at which he is angry” (I. 74). Crusoe similarly warns Friday they could be killed by God, ”when we do wicked Things here which offend him” (p. 219). At his conversion, Crusoe is aware that “I had not the due Punishment of my Sins”, and there is every indication that he is meant to be frightened by his dream (p. 132). When the man descended from the “great black Cloud”, Crusoe “heard a Voice so terrible”, and he confirms that “No one [...] will expect that I should be able to describe the Horrors of my Soul at this terrible Vision” (pp. 87-8).

Despite the obvious formal differences, there are good grounds for seeing *The Family Instructor* as a fore-runner of the “novels” Defoe was to go on to write, especially *Robinson Crusoe*. Many of the stylistic devices he was to employ later, he used in *The Family Instructor*; for instance his use of whole paragraphs, where other writers use sentences, his love of interpolation and his vividness, which carries the reader along with him (II. 52 and *R.C.* pp. 45-6). His style often approaches a kind of “stream of consciousness”. Indeed, Pat

Rogers commented that, “put alongside *Crusoe*, *Mrs Dalloway* seems to me an abstracted and distant rendition of feeling”.<sup>8</sup> For J. Donald Crowley, however, Defoe’s style is a “spoken” one, responding to speech rather than to written rhythms (p. xxv). Furbank and Owens state that Defoe frequently uses an “improvisatory” sentence, in which he does not know how it will end.<sup>9</sup>

Defoe’s interest in how reality is perceived is also in evidence in *The Family Instructor*. The first father is worried about the introduction of family worship to his elder children (I . 87). They challenge their parents regarding their upbringing (I. 114). The best example in *Robinson Crusoe* is the journey Robinson makes from his island and his coming back with the help of the eddy. Hitherto he had seen the place as his “island of despair”; it then becomes his “home” (pp. 139-41).

When comparing the style of *The Family Instructor* with that of *Robinson Crusoe*, we are often aware of Defoe’s use of verisimilitude. If we assume that names are part of the way in which an author creates verisimilitude and differentiates his characters one from another, then it is a shock when Defoe refuses to name his characters in *The Family Instructor*. Although his families live in particularised circumstances and he refers to the fact that they are known, they are not “real”. They embody general rather than particular behaviour. Perhaps his interest in the way men and women behave led him to devise a different form for *Robinson Crusoe*, in which he stresses the fact that Robinson is a “real” character.

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<sup>8</sup> Pat Rogers, *Robinson Crusoe*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1979), p. 125.

<sup>9</sup> P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, *The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 125-133.

Defoe can draw the reader into the situations he describes; we would say we identify with his characters, be they Crusoe in his escape from the shipwreck or the older teenagers defying their parents. Nevertheless, this does not make the fact of Crusoe's exemplary nature, nor that of the two elder teenagers, any less evident. As various commentators have noted, Robinson Crusoe is an "ordinary" man but also an "Everyman" figure.<sup>10</sup>

Defoe's interest in the way men and women are portrayed is evident in both volumes of *The Family Instructor* where there is frequently a male/female axis. The expectations of eighteenth-century young men and women were very different from those in our time. If we concentrate on freedom or restriction of movement, males will inevitably have the advantage; and if such freedom of movement is linked with money, it is especially powerful. In Volume I of *The Family Instructor* the young man's inheritance enables him to leave home and join the army, although he is ultimately unsuccessful. Crusoe, of course, as a young male, simply takes matters into his own hands and runs away from home and from the parents whose values he cannot share.

It appears, then, that despite his apparent desire to appeal to a contemporary audience, Defoe's presentation of the family in *The Family Instructor* is anachronistic. Despite showing the values of a more modern type of family he seems to favour a previous version.

Furthermore, the modern and the older forms are often in conflict. The battle is seen powerfully in the conflict between the emerging adults and the father. This is an issue for the elder children in *The Family Instructor* who challenge their father's right to require them to

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<sup>10</sup> Backscheider, p. 428; Ian Watt, "Robinson Crusoe as Myth" Quoted in Backscheider, p. 428; Richetti, *Crusoe*, pp. ix, xv; Maximillian E. Novak, *Realism, Myth and History in Defoe's Fiction* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 17.

change their behaviour and for the wives and their husbands in Volume II (I. 147 and II. 7). Significantly *Robinson Crusoe* begins with this conflict, the young Crusoe running away to sea, despite his father's advice. The father proffers "reasonable" arguments, which the son cannot accept. Much of his search for identity on the island is given to his attempt to come to terms with this conflict.

From his presentation of religion in *The Family Instructor* we can conclude that "religion" had a political dimension. Clearly, Defoe would have been aware of the implications of the work when he was writing it. By insisting that *The Family Instructor* is applicable both to members of the Church of England and to Dissenting Protestants it could be argued that he aimed to cut through their political differences and emphasise the extent to which their beliefs were shared. Nevertheless, despite the fact that in this work his ecumenism sometimes brought him close to the Latitudinarian position, he was always associated with the Dissenting community.<sup>11</sup>

It is possible to suggest similarities between the traditional conduct book and Defoe's *The Family Instructor* and between the style of the latter and that of *Robinson Crusoe*. But above all, by his portrayal of the two youngsters defying their parents in Volume I and of the wives challenging their husbands in Volume II, Defoe illustrates the clash between accepted, received opinion and more modern, individual values. We can clearly see *The Family*

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<sup>11</sup> Isabel Rivers states that the Latitudinarians were "an influential group of men who, in terms of doctrine want to reduce Christian religion to a few plain essentially moral fundamentals, easily to be apprehended [...] by the ordinary, rational man." Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), I, pp. 25-6, 27, 66. There are striking similarities between *The Family Instructor* and John Tillotson's sermon 50, preached at St Lawrence Jewry on 13 June 1684. Tillotson was himself a "Latitudinarian", but we have no evidence Defoe heard him preach..

*Instructor* as evidence of Defoe's transitional position. Seeing the work as depicting the struggle between individual and communal values makes more sense to the modern reader than seeing it as the result of Defoe's battle against the Schism Act (with P.N. Furbank and Irving Rothman), or as evidence of the political struggle at the death of Queen Anne (with A. Makikali and A. Mueller). As post-Romantics, we are used to accepting the value of the individual and it is hard for us to envisage a time when accepted, communal, values were the norm. By seeing *The Family Instructor* in this way, we remember what a long, slow process the growth of individualism was. Further, if we look at *The Family Instructor* as a paradigm for change, as an example of the tensions between shared values and those of the individual, its enduring value is clear. It becomes a most interesting work.

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